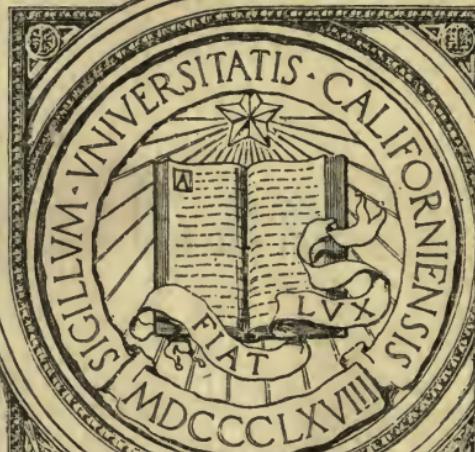
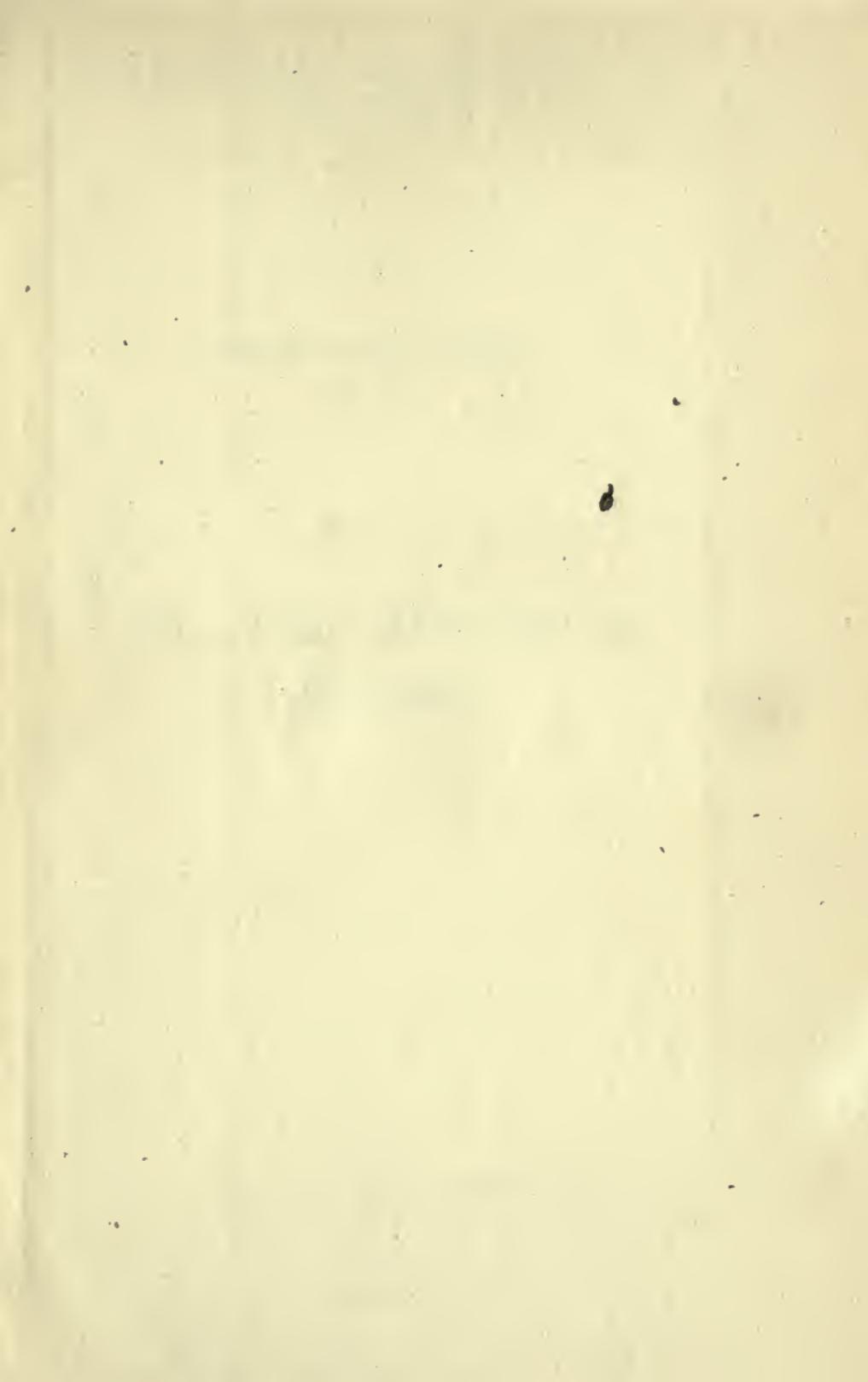
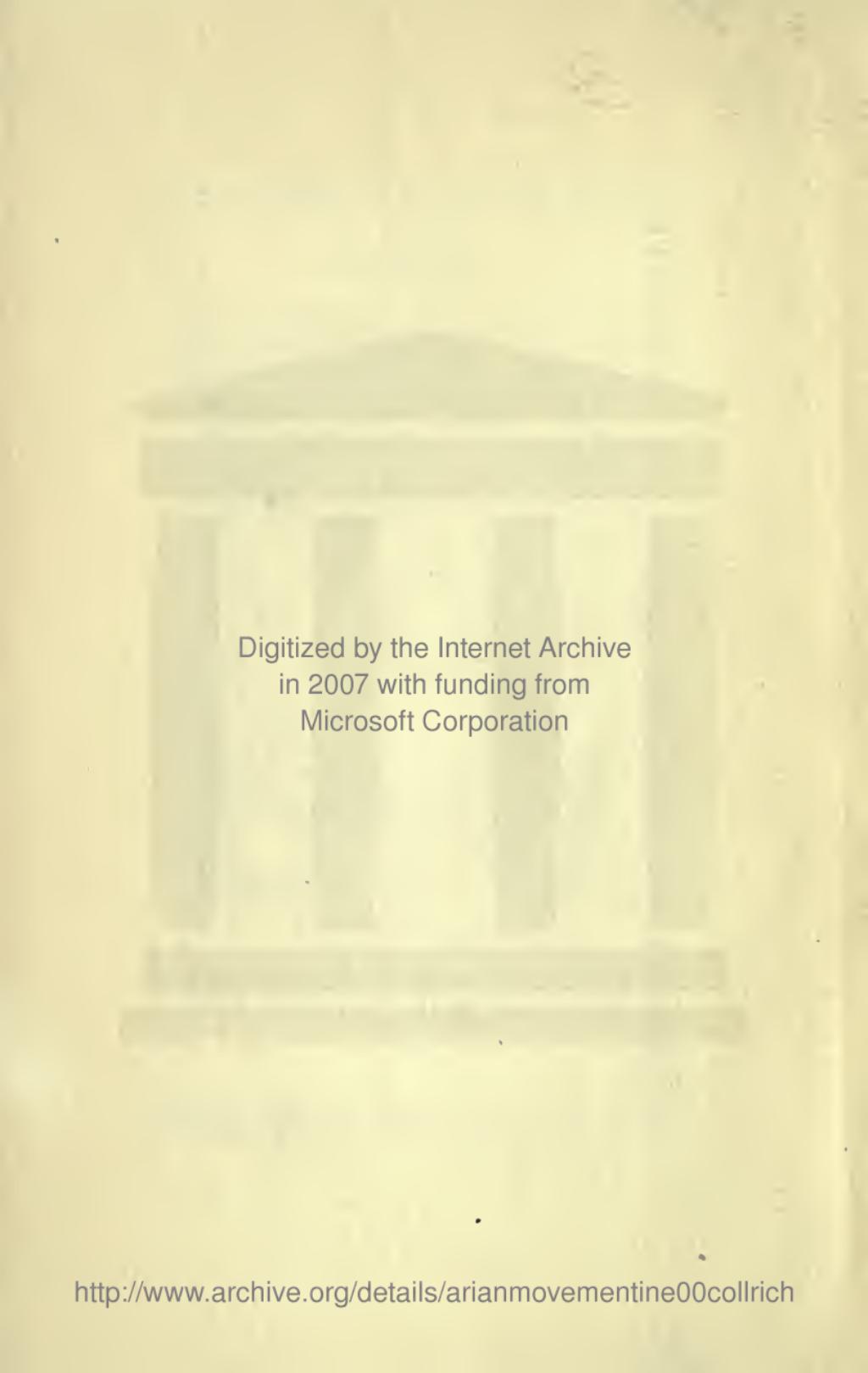


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*The Arian Movement in
England*

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THE
ARIAN MOVEMENT
IN
ENGLAND

BY

J. HAY COLLIGAN, M.A.
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TO
THE SENATE
AND
THE STUDENTS
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264077

PREFACE.

The following chapters are the outcome of research extending over a period of some years, undertaken as a student of the University of Manchester. The enormous quantity of material hidden away in bookshelves seldom disturbed, has made it difficult to do more than place results before the reader, and the scope of the work has prevented the introduction of much that is interesting and illuminative regarding the eighteenth century in England. An attempt has been made to trace the connection between these pieces of forgotten literature, and to observe the development of a school of thought in English religion which has not always been recognised by students of that period.

I desire to express my sincere thanks to the Librarian of the Dr. Williams' Library, and to his courteous Assistants: to the Rev. T. Crippen of the Memorial Hall Library, London, and to others who by valuable information supplied through correspondence have assisted in various ways. My warmest thanks are due to Professor Tout, whose sympathy has been much appreciated, and to the Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., who has crowned all his previous acts of kindness by preparing the Index.

To those who know the complicated story which

is outlined here, no apology will be necessary for not having mentioned every name and every fact, which with comparative ease might have been recorded. That has not been the object of these chapters. After all, while History is worth an examination for its own sake, it bears a message on its lips to the generation that is willing to listen, and my endeavour has been to hear what the English Christianity of the eighteenth century has to tell the twentieth.

J. HAY COLLIGAN.

LIVERPOOL,

April, 1913.

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The Arian Movement in
England

INTRODUCTION.

THE Arian Movement represents an extraordinary phase of English Christianity in the eighteenth century. It was unable to modify the traditional doctrine of the Established Church on the subject of the deity of Christ, and it had little permanent effect upon the Nonconformist tradition. The results of the Movement were so disastrous to Nonconformity, that orthodox writers usually approach the subject with mingled fear and shame.

One of the traditional doctrines which the Reformers of the sixteenth century accepted from the Catholic Church was that of the deity of Jesus, as expressed in the Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed. Both symbols were misleading in their title, and the Athanasian Creed was a document of at least a century later than the date of the Council of Nicea. The discussions on the subject of the Trinity which were prevalent among the Reformers abroad, did not affect the English Reformers. Throughout the theological and ecclesiastical discussions of the seventeenth century, there was no discordant note upon this doctrine from any of the influential parties.¹ When the Act of Toleration was passed in 1689, a stringent clause in it made the denial of the Trinity a penal offence. In less than a century afterwards, Calvinism rigid and resolute, had ceased to live in English religious life, and the numerous questions which

1. The harmony of the Reformed Churches on this subject may be seen in *The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity*, by Some London Ministers. 1719. The names of the ministers were Messrs. Tong, Robinson, Smith and Reynolds.

THE ARIAN MOVEMENT

that system had stilled began to reappear in spectral form.

Before proceeding to the narration of the story, a reference must be made to the terminology of the subject, which changed with every period. The word "orthodoxy" is to modern minds a useless and meaningless one, but having found a place in the language of theology it will be used in these pages to signify the deity of our Lord, as formulated in the Athanasian Creed. With regard to the word "Trinity," Francis Cheynell declared that he had never heard the phrase, "Trinity in the Godhead" in English, until he read it in John Fry's pamphlet. The term "Calvinist" was not generally used before the middle of the seventeenth century, and "Calvinistic" does not appear before the first quarter of the eighteenth. The word "Unitarian" has varied in meaning, and in the earliest use of it in England it included a scheme of the Trinity.¹ Joseph Boyse, referring to Nye's use, objected to it on the ground that the matter in dispute was not that of the unity of the divine nature. Upon the revival of the word, it was used from about 1770 in its philosophic sense, but even as late as 1786, the word

1. According to a valuable note kindly supplied by the Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A., the term "Trinitarius" was first applied to impugners of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. The term "Trinitarians" was first applied by Servetus, in 1553, to maintainers of the Catholic doctrine, and it was this application of the term which was made a capital charge by Calvin. "In both cases, the term was used to imply (though on different grounds) that the position so designated was destructive of the Divine Unity."

The term "Unitarius" was first used abroad to describe the Unipersonality of the Godhead, although it was never adopted by, and was indeed resented by, F. Socinus and his followers in Poland. The term "Unitarian" was used in England by Henry Hedworth and William Penn in 1672, in the sense in which it had been used abroad, and Hedworth (probably the coiner of the word) included Arians under it.

had not a fixed meaning. Price called Priestley's view, "the genuine Socinian position." Priestley however preferred the term "Unitarian," but in his "Memoirs" he wrote the word without a capital letter. It was not given up to the Unitarians by the Trinitarians without a contest, and at the close of the eighteenth century, when it came to be applied to the unity rather than to the unipersonality of God, the Baptist critic of Socinianism, Andrew Fuller, asserted that he was a true Unitarian, as he believed in the three Persons in the One God. The Arians declining the word in 1774, protested against a use which denoted One absolute Person in the Godhead.

The theological contents of "Arian" and "Socinian" have also varied. In the last decade of the seventeenth century their meanings were nearly equivalent to those historical views. The Socinian view was distinctly separated from the Arian one by its rejection of the pre-existence of Christ, and its acceptance of the impersonality of the Holy Spirit. On the question of divine honour to Jesus, the Arian and the Socinian agreed. It was the Socinian theology on a fundamental subject, like that of the Atonement, which created the widest divergence between Arian and Socinian.

Two other things may be referred to, *viz.*, the inappropriateness of the titles which adhered to the various parties, and their unwillingness to receive them. These will be dealt with later, when we shall see how men like Whiston, Clarke and Peirce refused the name of Arian. The fluctuation of opinions makes it difficult to fix with certainty a title to a man, or to a party, and as the Movement in England was not cumulative, the exact period of change is generally obscure. In other countries it followed the normal progression from Trinitarian

to Sabellian; then successively, to Arian, Socinian and Unitarian. In England, a Socinian view appeared before the Arian. Again, the Socinian and Arian tenets grew together. There was no deep friendship between the Arian and the Socinian, although each agreed that the other ought to be tolerated; but judged by the standard of theological belief at the close of the eighteenth century, the Arian is distinguished as a believer in the divinity, though not the deity of Christ, from the Socinian who had accepted a humanitarian view.

CHAPTER I.

THE SOURCES OF THE MOVEMENT.

THE doctrine of the Trinity was one which the Reformers of Europe left undisturbed. The problems that had been forced upon them by the break-up of the hierarchical system were sufficiently grave, without encountering the abstruse questions of metaphysics. Calvin wrote to the Protestants of Poland, cautioning them against a tritheistic manner of expression, which was common among the Roman Catholics.¹ Melanchthon wrote to Joachim Camerarius in 1533, foreshadowing the possibility of tragedies that the question of the Trinity might raise among posterity.² Although the Reformers prudently avoided the subject, it was raised in different countries by Calvin, by Michael Servetus the Spaniard, Faustus Paulus Socinus the Italian, George Blandrata a Piedmontese, and many others.

It was the enlightened policy of the kingdom of Poland, which enabled Synods to be held in that country in the middle of the sixteenth century where members of all the Reformed Churches—Lutheran Calvinistic and Anti-Trinitarian—were brought together.³ Rees points out that they were not known by the name of “Unitarian,” in Poland. In 1565, an attempt was made to bring about unity, but it failed. In 1569, ten years before Faustus

1. *Ep. ad Polonos*, Edit. Amerstd., p. 591.

2. Quoted in Benson's Letters on Calvin and Servetus, originally published in *The Old Whig*, 1737-8.

3. Details may be found in the admirable sketch by Thomas Rees, prefixed to an edition of the Racovian Catechism, 1818.

Socinus arrived in Poland, the city of Raków was built for the Anti-Trinitarians by a nobleman attached to their interests. A Church and a College were erected, and the latter was filled with students from every part of Europe, the number at one time being a thousand, of which three hundred were from noble families. In 1579, after much discussion, a Confession of Faith was drawn up that insisted upon the worship of Christ. For nearly a century, the Anti-Trinitarians were opposed by Catholic and Reformed alike. The College at Raków was closed in 1638, and in 1655, the peasants of Poland rose against the Anti-Trinitarians. The latter were scattered, about the year 1660, and found their way into Prussia, Holland and other lands. Those who went to Prussia were able to maintain an independent existence, but those who went to Flanders and Holland ultimately joined with the Remonstrants, Mennonites, or the Low Arminians and Baptists of Holland. It was from Holland that the famous volumes were issued which gave their doctrines a universal reputation, and it was partly through the English students who had studied abroad, and partly through the printed page that their opinions reached England.¹

Many cases of heresy on the subject of the Trinity occurred in England, from the middle of the sixteenth century. The greater number were foreign refugees, a notable case being that of Jacobus Acontius (1500?—1566?). The severe measures of repression arose from the fear lest the cause of the Reformation should be overthrown, and Elizabeth referring to Anabaptists, expressed

1. Henry Hedworth, a layman who died in 1705, and a Unitarian, followed the modified Socinianism of Bidle. In 1662, he actively supported Firmin in raising funds for the exiled Anti-Trinitarians in Poland.

her regret that she had such monsters in her kingdom. The burning of Bartholomew Legate at Smithfield, in 1612, and of Edward Wightman at Lichfield, in the same year, marked the extreme stage of persecution. Legate was the last martyr at Smithfield; and Wightman was the last martyr to be burned in England for heresy.¹

The year 1636 may be taken approximately, as the beginning of a reaction against Calvinism. It was marked by a revival of ecclesiastical ritual, and by the increasing influence of Laud. That prelate was unfavourable to Socinianism, for in 1639, he denounced Dr. Adam Francius, a refugee, and a physician at Cambridge, as "a desperate Socinian," who was seeking "in a sly manner to pervert the younger sort."² Laud's sympathy was with the Arminian party, which he used to stem the Calvinistic current that was running strongly.

The views of the Anti-Trinitarians who were in England at that time, were diverse. They unanimously accepted the supremacy of the Father, but the relative position of the Son, together with the questions relating to his Nature and his Incarnation were matters upon which there was much variety of opinion.

With the exception of the Arminian party, whose view of the Trinity while higher than that of the Anti-Trinitarians was not exactly orthodox, the rest of English Christendom accepted the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed.

A recent writer has pointed out that Calvinistic ideas were introduced into English theology by the exiles who

1. Anti-Trinitarian opinions appear in the first Baptist Church in England, founded in London in 1613 by Thos. Helwys. *Vide John Smith, the Se-Baptist*, by Walter H. Burgess. 1911.

2. Laud's aggressive attitude is seen in the Canons of 1640.

returned upon the death of Mary, in 1558.¹ Prior to that period, English religious thought had been dominated by Lutheran ideas. The teaching of Calvin was drawn from the "Institutes," which was used at the English Universities, especially at Cambridge. Upon the death of Elizabeth in 1603, the religion of England became sectarian.

A book that was published about this time, which came frequently to be quoted and was republished in the eighteenth century, was by William Chillingworth.² In his day, Protestantism had not been firmly established, and his own career from Protestant to Roman Catholic, and back again to Protestant, is a good illustration of the fluctuations that were consistently possible in one lifetime.

In the eighteenth century much was written about the principles of Chillingworth, that could not be deduced without ignoring the fundamental position of his book. The liberty which he advocated, was in direct opposition to Roman Catholic tyranny. He writes about "captivating the understanding by Scripture only," and it is apparent that he would have insisted upon subscription to the absolute contents of Scripture. His argument was directed against a Jesuit opponent, and as such, he had to present a broad line of attack. It is an imperfect description to call Chillingworth a Rationalist, as Principal Tulloch has done. In a very fine simile, describing universal liberty as turning the streams of Christendom to truth and unity, Chillingworth nevertheless perceives that universal liberty must be moderated by the Scriptures.

Francis Cheynell gives the date of the public

1. *The Creeds and Confessions of Christendom.* Prof. Curtis, 1911.
2. *The Religion of Protestants a safe Way of Salvation,* 1638.

appearance of Socinianism in England as 1645, although reference had been made to the subject in the Canons passed on the initiation of Laud, in 1640. Cheynell's date coincides with the year in which Bidle was prosecuted at Gloucester. The publication of Samuel Bolton's book,¹ of an English edition of Richard Simon's work, and of translated portions of the "Stratagems" of Acontius were indications of the increase of liberty of opinion. When Ephraim Pagitt issued his quaint but interesting volume in 1645, he remarked, "we have Socinians among us; we have Arians among us."²

In the year 1648, two noteworthy books were published. One was by John Bidle,³ and the other by John Fry.⁴ Cheynell described Fry's work as "a sad book," and answered it in 1650. The spread of Socinian doctrine, not only on the subject of the Trinity, but in its anti-Calvinistic views increased rapidly. Additional solvents were at work, one being the Arminianism of Laud's party, and another the work of a band of men known as the Cambridge Platonists. One of the most distinguished of the latter group was Nathaniel Culverwell, whose work on the "Light of Nature" is still attractive by its sweet reasonableness. Culverwell's theological position was that of a group, who according to Dorner,⁵ intended by the Platonic Trinity to denote a milder species of Arianism. Culverwell's plea for Reason is, that it does not follow

1. *Arraignment of Error*, 1646.

2. *Heresiographie*, 1645.

3. *A Confession of Faith concerning the Trinity according to Scripture*.

4. *An Answer to the Charge, etc.*

5. *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*. English edition, 1863. This edition contains a good article by Dr. Patrick Fairbairn, on Anti-Trinitarian opinion in England, which requires to be supplemented by research since that date.

because some who pretend to Reason have run out of it, and beyond it, and beside it, none must therefore come near it; "because Socinus has burned his wings at this candle of the Lord, must none therefore make use of it?"

It was clear that the Calvinistic party had reached the height of its power, and was in danger of falling. A number of prosecutions followed, partly in self-defence. The most celebrated was that of John Bidle (1615-62), whose name will always be associated with the spread of Anti-Trinitarianism in England. Although not dependent upon the sources of Polish Unitarianism, he afterwards studied the works of those writers, and arrived at a Socinian position. At this early date, Arianism and Socinianism were separate. John Knowles, who had been influenced by Bidle, was preaching Arian doctrine at Chester, in 1650. John Fry was deprived of his seat in Parliament in 1651, for publishing a Sabellian pamphlet. Paul Best, a Cambridge scholar, who had imbibed Socinian doctrine in Germany, was imprisoned in the Gatehouse for two years, from the year 1645.

From this period to the Act of Uniformity, the questions of religion were discussed with intense feeling by all parties. During this time, the General Baptists emerged as a distinct organisation.¹ This body had arisen from the Continental Baptists, through the Lollards. In the eastern parts of Essex and Kent the characteristic was Anabaptism; while in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire the characteristic was Lollardism. These two elements never coalesced, and doctrinal divisions were frequent. At a later date, by means of a Declaration of Faith they

1. Dr. Whitley's two volumes recently published, on *The History of the General Baptists*, deal exhaustively with this subject.

challenged the positions taken up by the Westminster Assembly, especially on the subject of Redemption.

The object of the Act of Uniformity was to unify, if not to unite, but it had the effect of dividing the parties in the Church of England. A scriptural polity and an evangelical doctrine were essential to the Puritan clergy. The reply of this party to the Act of Uniformity was more eloquent than words, and their voluntary acceptance of conditions that comprised ejection, penalties and persecution, was an event of English Christianity which for religious heroism will never be surpassed.

Although the Act of Uniformity gave dominance to a party whose polity had been unacceptable for nearly a century before, and in this respect settled the matter of Church government in the Established Church, it had another effect, and that was to introduce a great variety of religious opinion. The supremacy of the Calvinistic theology had disappeared, and the conflict of the Civil War had turned the minds of men to social questions on the basis of individual rights. Questions of privilege, of property, of tenure, and of tithes began to agitate many a quiet manor and parish, and a sense of freedom arose in humble hearts from which emerged the beginnings of England's democratic era.¹

While here and there a book appeared which showed that the new theology had not ceased to flow, the Nonconformists for the ten years succeeding the Act of Uniformity were engaged on a sterner task than the development of doctrine. They were fighting the battle of religious liberty, which to them was synonymous with liberty of

1. *Vide* an article on "The Penruddock Kist," in *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society*, New Series, vol. ix, p. 225.

opinion. During this period the Established Church was not sympathetic with advanced views, and when Pearson was appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, he announced his intention of going back to the Schoolmen.¹

Although hostilities between the various parties continued to 1689, when the Act of Toleration was passed, it was evident from the temporary Indulgence of 1672 that rigid uniformity had been recognised as impossible, and that a new dawn of knowledge could only break when traditional ignorance had been dispersed.² The first sign of that day appeared, with the publication of "The Naked Truth."

1. Mullinger's *Cambridge*, 1911.

2. Philip Henry characterised the situation thus: "The Conformists generally displeased at it, the Presbyterians glad, the Independents very glad, and the Baptists triumphant."

CHAPTER II.

THE TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

THE Trinitarian controversy, for convenience, may be dated from the publication of "The Naked Truth," in 1675. It was written by Herbert Croft, D.D. (1603-91), who had been reinstated at the Restoration, and made Bishop of Hereford. Anthony Wood likened the appearance of Croft's book to a comet, and the simile applies to the excitement which it created, and to its transitory character. Croft's view was tolerant, and designed with the object of attaining Comprehension. The Apostles' Creed was the basis of agreement, he remarked, not because it was written by the Apostles, but because it was evident that all which was in the Creed was in Scripture. If the Early Church accepted this as the sum total of Faith necessary to Salvation, why should it not always be accepted? Had the state of salvation altered? If Constantine had pursued his intention to suppress all heresy by commanding Scripture expressions, the Arian heresy would soon have expired.

Croft's book was attacked by the clergy, especially by Francis Turner, D.D. (1638?—1700), who called it, "the dregs of Mr. Hobbes."¹ Another writer who had also been reinstated and rewarded, took the occasion to raise the whole question of Tradition, and in an ecclesiastical spirit adopted the defensive attitude.² Gilbert Burnet,

1. *Animadversions, etc.* (Dr. Williams' Library).

2. *Lex Talionis*, 1676 (Dr. Peter Gunning).

who was shortly afterwards made Bishop of Chichester, reproved Croft for doing harm to his "ghostly mother" by stripping her naked. Burnet drew attention to the comprehensive character of the Thirty-nine Articles, and expressed the opinion that it was no longer possible to advocate Scripture as the only standard, as men had introduced corrupt glosses upon Scripture phrases.¹

Croft found a defender in Andrew Marvel the younger (1621-78), who in an essay appended to his tract gives a vivacious account of Councils and Creeds, and the Inquisition, pointing out that while the early councils had been on the subject of doctrine, those in England from the time of Edward VI had been on the inferior subject of ceremonies.²

For the next few years, there were several indications of the slow growth of liberty of opinion. In 1682, a book³ was written by Daniel Whitby, D.D. (1638-1726), who appears later in the story of the Movement. Its object was to minimise indifferent and unnecessary things. It was written in a spirit thoroughly Protestant, and thoroughly reasonable, but it caused the author the loss of his previous popularity, and was regarded suspiciously by the Dissenters, to whom he appealed to join in communion with the Church of England.

A further illustration of bigotry, was the case of Samuel Bold (1649-1737), a Dorsetshire vicar, who preached a sermon in favour of the French refugees, and another advocating moderation towards Dissenters.⁴ This applica-

1. *A Modest Survey . . . Naked Truth*, 1676 (Chetham Library, Manchester).

2. *Mr. Smirke, or The Divine in Mode*, 1676 (Dr. Williams' Library).

3. *The Protestant Reconciler*.

4. *A Plea for Moderation towards Dissenters*, 1682 (Dr. Williams' Library).

tion of the principle of toleration was not appreciated, and Bold was fined and imprisoned.

The interest which the subject had for statesmen of the time was illustrated by a pamphlet written by the second Duke of Buckingham (1628-87), whose tutor was Abraham Woodhead the controversialist. Although coming from a man of no religious convictions, the pamphlet must have helped to widen the political horizon, and to extend the view of toleration. It declared that nothing could be more anti-Christian, or more contrary to sense and reason, than to trouble and molest fellow-Christians because they could not exactly be of our mind in all things relating to the worship of God.¹

A precursor of the views of Locke was William Popple, a London merchant, who in an ingenious way endeavoured to unite the position of Revelation and Reason. While recognising the absolute value of Reason, he perceived "the frequency with which we do either slip or break the fine-spun thread of our own consequences." The stronger force therefore may be found in the Christian religion, where there are new degrees of light and strength surpassing those of common Nature.²

It is to John Locke (1632-1704) that the honours must be given, for having apprehended the religious permanence of the principle of Toleration. He led men back to the example of the primitive Church in doctrine, and especially in the apostolic realisation of the power of Christian love. He is emphatic in the opinion that all but Atheists should be tolerated, and his reason for this exception is that the bonds of human society could have no hold on an Atheist,

1. *The Reasonableness of Men's having a Religion* (Dr. Williams' Library).

2. *A Rational Catechism*, 1687 (Dr. Williams' Library). Popple was the translator of Locke's first Letter on Toleration.

and the taking away of God, although only in thought, dissolved everything. Apart from this, he was prepared to give freedom to all sects, and even to concede the civil rights of the Commonwealth to Pagan, Mohammedan and Jew.

It was to be expected that during a period when men were giving and taking religious liberty in an unprecedented way, heretical views would appear. In "The Protestant's Plea for a Socinian" the writer had drawn attention to the inconsistency of English Protestantism, which professing to acknowledge the Bible only, imposes the unscriptural word "con-substantial" on those who subscribe to the formulary which contains it. He suggested that a man should be allowed to hold the doctrines of the Athanasian Creed in silence, instead of being compelled to give his assent to them, remarking that if Chillingworth was regarded as a dutiful son of the Church of England, so ought he to be.¹

The Act of Toleration was as eagerly desired by the State, as by the Church.² One writer, calling the period "the present June of our affairs," suggested terms of a Bill for uniting Protestants, who had been divided for the previous thirty years.³ He defined the Thirty-nine Articles as theses for agreement, and not laws, of which a doctrinal interpretation would not be necessary if assent or subscription were given. The Act of Toleration did

1. By Abraham Woodhead (1609—1678). This pamphlet was originally published in *A Rational Account of the Doctrine of Roman Catholicks* (2nd Edition, 1673). It appeared separately in 1686 (a copy in the British Museum), and the following year Archbishop Tenison replied to it in *The Difference between the Protestant and Socinian Methods*.

2. The popular name is given to this Act throughout this work.

3. The desire for Union was general, as may be seen from *An Address of the Dissenting Ministers in and about the City of London to the King and Queen*, 1689. A copy in Dr. Williams' Library.

not, however, eradicate all religious differences. The legal status of the Roman Catholics remained unaltered, and the Act did not apply to deniers of the Trinity.

The Trinitarian controversy which had been dormant since the days of Biddle became active again, by the writings of Stephen Nye (1648?—1719), a Hertfordshire vicar. Thomas Firmin (1632-97), a London mercer, who as a young man had been influenced by Biddle's Christological opinions, and by the Arminian views of John Goodwin, now became friendly with Nye and assisted in the publication of his works.

In the year 1687, Nye issued "A Brief History."¹ This memorable pamphlet in the story of the Trinitarian controversy was addressed as a series of four letters to "A Friend," (Firmin) and a letter "by a person of excellent learning"² was appended.³

When the Commission which William III had authorised held its sittings in the Autumn of 1689, a number of questions were considered relating to the controversy, and especially to the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed, and several recommendations were made. This Commission proved abortive, and disappeared at the dissolution of Parliament.

One of the earliest instances where the Act of Toleration brought relief, was that of the General Baptists. From the time of the Act of Uniformity until 1686, there had been no open meeting, but in 1688 six "Churches" formed an Association on the basis of "A Brief Confession," which had been drawn up in 1660.

1. *A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians.* An enlarged edition in 1691.

2. Henry Hedworth.

3. The orthodox position was maintained by Charles Leslie (1650-1722) in *The Socinian Trinity Explained* (1694), and in *The Socinian Controversy Discuss'd in Six Dialogues*. 2nd Edition, 1719.

In the year 1690 a pamphlet appeared, that created much comment.¹ It was written by Arthur Bury, D.D. (1624—1713), the Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, who had been expelled from the position in the previous year. The object of Bury's work was to find out what was the Gospel that our Lord and His Apostles preached; what additions and alterations later ages had made in it, and what advantages and dangers had thereupon ensued. He came to the conclusion that the subject of the Trinity was impertinent to our Lord's design, that it was fruitless, and that it was dangerous.

Bury's book was straightway denounced, and publicly burned at Oxford. Although he wrote a defence of it, and several other books appeared on his side, he afterwards recanted.

Bury's position was not allowed to go unchallenged, and there were several replies to it, but the one which initiated a long discussion was that published by John Wallis, D.D. (1616—1703), Savilian Professor of Geometry at Oxford, for the long period of fifty-four years.² Wallis was a distinguished scholar, and took up the problem of the Trinity from a mathematical standpoint. He used the analogy of a cube to illustrate the traditional theory of the Trinity, and tried to demonstrate that there were three Somewhats in the Trinity which were but One God, and these Somewhats were commonly called Persons.³ This unfortunate analogy was not satisfactory to any party, and suggested a Modal Trinity, after the view of Archbishop Tillotson. An answer was given to Wallis by

1. *The Naked Gospel.* The title is an echo of Croft's 1675 pamphlet.

2. Wallis issued seven separate letters, but in 1690 published *The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity*.

3. A diagram is given in the first "Letter."

William Sherlock (1641?—1707), Dean of Saint Paul's.¹ Sherlock's work was replied to by a member of the new party, who strongly disclaiming the Arian hypothesis declared that he was offering no more than Taylor (Jeremy), Chillingworth, and Hales of Eton. This writer's objection was not to the doctrine of the Trinity as a private opinion, but to the scandal of imposing it, and he states that he would have written as much against the Socinians, if they had desired to impose their hypothesis.²

The discussion having been started was difficult to restrain, and the points of attack were many and varied. It could be approached, for example, as Locke did from the philosophic side, where the relationship between Revelation and Reason is defined; or from the textual side as in the case of Sir Isaac Newton, where two material texts for the doctrine of the Trinity were critically examined. A third way of opposing traditional orthodoxy was taken by the publication in the same year, of the account of a debate on the divinity of Jesus Christ, by Samuel Eaton and John Knowles.³ The most direct method of attack, however, was by the new "Unitarian" party.

A spirited opponent of Sherlock was Robert South, D.D. (1634—1716). After a distinguished career at Oxford, he settled as Rector of Islip. South, who brought his keen wit into the combat, declared that he would leave Sherlock and the Socinians to fight out the matters in dispute between them, and all that he wished to do was to point out that the doctrine of the Established Church

1. *A Vindication of the Holy and Ever-Blessed Trinity*, 1690.

2. *A Vindication of the Unitarians*, 1690 (Dr. Williams' Library). Van Mildert, the biographer of Waterland, states that the substance of this tract was published in Le Clerc's life of Eusebius.

A Friendly Debate, etc.

was, "a stranger to his novel and beloved notions; it knows them not, it owns them not."¹

This period was an important one in the controversy. In addition to the publication of the first volume of the "Socinian Tracts,"² and the issue of six of the seven letters which Wallis wrote on the subject, several new writers entered the arena. Nye replied to Wallis, from the "Unitarian" point of view, and Sherlock maintained his previous position. An Arian writer defended the "Unitarian" view, and introduced an argument that the Trinity being as great a mystery as Transubstantiation, was as much to be questioned by Protestants, on Reformation principles, as that piece of ecclesiastical dogma. Wallis emphasised his original position, by publishing three sermons, two of which were upon the current controversy, but the third had been preached at Oxford in 1664, from the notes of a still earlier sermon.³ Matters were now tending in the direction of a conflict of parties, and the situation was intensified by the publication of the second volume of the "Socinian Tracts." It consisted of ten pieces, of which four at least were by Nye. One of them is valuable for the distinction, new to English theology, which it made between the orthodox and the Socinian writers. The orthodox defined religion as containing nothing but that which is sublime or great. The Socinian, on the other hand, judged religion to be that which confessedly is to direct our conversation and manners, and,

1. *Animadversions upon Dr. Sherlock's Book, etc.*, 1690 (Dr. Williams' Library).

2. This volume, marked C.K. 3 M.H.L. in the Library at Memorial Hall, London, consists chiefly of reprints of Bidle's tracts.

3. In addition to the "Unitarian" view supported by Nye, there was an anonymous Arian writer. *Vide The Arian's Vindication of Himself* (Dr. Williams' Library).

as a consequence, it should be plain and obvious, neither sublime nor great.

An idea of the stir in the theological life of England at this time, can only be faintly given. The Neonomian controversy was agitating the Nonconformists. In the Establishment, replies for and against the doctrine of the Trinity appeared from every side. Wetenhall,¹ Tillotson, Charles Leslie the Non-juror, and John Williams Bishop of Chichester endeavoured to defend the orthodox position, while the "Unitarian" party, the chief of whom was Nye, carried on a vigorous campaign.²

These events brought the controversy up to the year 1694 when a new phase appeared, by an "Appeal" to Oxford and Cambridge, which a contemporary writer described as one of the worst productions which the English Socinians had issued. At this anxious time, a pamphlet was published attempting to mediate between the Arian and the Athanasian view.³ Its author was Edward Fowler, D.D. (1632—1714), Bishop of Gloucester, who stated that his view was similar to that of Ralph Cudworth, and of Bishop Bull. Fowler's object in examining afresh the views of the Nicene Fathers was to replace "recent accounts," which had only made "sport for the Socinians." He admitted a priority of the Father in the doctrine of the Trinity, and maintained a Unity in the Godhead, using the illustration of Light which emanates from the

1. Wetenhall developed a strong opposition to Sherlock's view, in the *Antapology of the Melancholy Stander By*, 1693 (Dr. Williams' Library).

2. *An Answer to Dr. Wallis's Three Letters Concerning the Trinity*, 1691; also in the same year *Observations on the Four Letters of Dr. John Wallis, etc.*; both of these were by Stephen Nye.

3. It was first published in 1693 with the title of *Twenty-eight Propositions*, and also in 1694, as *Certain Propositions*. In 1695 it was published again by Fowler, with the title *A Second Defence*. This issue also contained "A Third Defence." The "First Defence" was in *Certain Propositions*.

sun, that orb being prior in the order of Nature, but not prior in time.¹

The year 1695 saw the crisis of the Trinitarian controversy. Tindal issued his "Reflections" on Fowler's view, and Fowler replied in a "Second Defence." In this year was also published a book that profoundly and permanently affected English theology and philosophy.² Locke's theological opinions have been much discussed, without satisfactory conclusions. An eminent scholar has described him as, "the Socinus of his age," and this appropriately characterised Locke as far as his methods were concerned. In theology he took a middle position between that of original Socinianism and primitive Arianism, but the scope of his theology, like that of the rest of his work, was too wide for any single scheme. He aimed at creating a philosophy of the Christian religion, and his simple formula, "that Jesus is the Messiah," was offered with this end in view. It would not be considered sufficient of itself, in these days, and it was not appreciated in those days when Calvinistic theology was a real religious system; but one contemporary writer described it as, "the proposition happily provided for the quietening of the minds of the honest multitude, or the bulk of mankind floating in doubts and fears."³

The whole question had now become a grave one, as since the Act of Toleration, at least seven views of the

1. Another presentation was put forward by William Burrough, rector of Chynes, Bucks, in *An Account of the Blessed Trinity argued from the Nature and Person of the Supreme Spirit*, 1694. An active writer on the orthodox side at this time was Jonathan Edwards (1629—1712), who contended that Socinianism was a new religion.

2. *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.

3. *Socinian Tracts*, vol. iii, 6. A criticism of Locke is, *Animadversions on a late book entitled The Reasonableness, etc.*, 1697 (Dr. Williams' Library).

doctrine of the Trinity were in circulation among English theologians. South renewed his attack upon Sherlock, characterising the latter's view as Tritheism. The culmination of events occurred in October of this year, when a sermon was preached before the University of Oxford by Joseph Bingham, a Fellow of University College. In it he openly defended the scheme of Sherlock. The authorities becoming alarmed, issued a Decree on November 25, 1695, and without giving Sherlock's name, declared his view to be false, impious and heretical, disagreeing with, and contrary to, the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and especially to the doctrine of the Church of England.¹ The Oxford decree stilled the controversy for a time, but Sherlock published a pamphlet in the following year, to which a reply was given by the aged Dr. Wallis.

Bishop Bull, whose famous work had been in circulation for some years, took no part in this controversy, being engaged at the time in refuting the arguments of Episcopius, Zwicker and others; but at the request of Lord Arundel, who wished to know the difference between the views of Sherlock and South, he published a tract anonymously.²

In the year 1696 the flood of theological speculation became so strong, that the ancient fabric of the Trinity was in danger. In addition to pamphlets like "Eye-salve,"³ where the author professed to believe in a "Trinity in Unity and a Unity in Trinity; but not that Trinity is Unity, or that Unity is Trinity," there were other more serious signs. Bishop Stillingfleet was carry-

1. A translation is in *Socinian Tracts*, vol. iv, 9.

2. *Discourse on the Doctrine of the Catholic Church*.

3. *Eye-Salve Recommended to the World*, 1696 (Dr. Williams' Library)

ing on a controversy with Locke on the subject, defending the recognised Confessions and Creeds.¹ Toland created a new aspect by his searching enquiry upon the relationship of Revelation to Reason,² being himself a disciple of Locke who was prepared to go further than his master. An admirable criticism of the Socinian position was made by Rev. H. de Luzancy, Vicar of Dovercourt and Harwich. He pointed out that the Socinians took it for granted that Faith and Reason were two different things, and that what was the object of Faith could not be the object of Reason. He reminded them that the means of clearing up a controversy were Reason and Authority; that the Scripture was our authority; and that to describe the Trinity as false, because it was incomprehensible, was a lamentable consequence.³ This line of argument was also developed by Francis Gastrell, afterwards Bishop of Chester, who in an examination of Sherlock's view admitted the worth of some of the Socinian criticisms of the Athanasian Creed, but contended that although dealing with an incomprehensible subject, this document contained nothing inconsistent with the Unity of God, or the principles of right Reason.

The controversy went on, mainly within the Established Church. In April, 1697, Sherlock preached a sermon at St. Paul's, on the danger of corrupting Faith by Philosophy. He was speedily answered by a "Unitarian" writer, who suggested that the sermon was only a revengeful reply to the Oxford decree, and pointed out that Sherlock's mistake was in making the ideas

1. *A Vindication of the Trinity.*

2. *Christianity not Mysterious*, 1696.

3. *Remarks on Several Late Writings, etc.*, 1696 (Dr. Williams' Library). Also a sermon preached at Colchester, June 2nd, 1697.

"intelligent essence," and "substance" identical, so that as often as, "you multiply the one, you multiply the other."¹

In this year Nye published an anonymous tract which expressed Firmin's own view, and which was circulated at his expense. It is an able piece, and purported to be a full answer to the "infamations of Mr. Edwards, and the needless exceptions of my Lord the Bishop of Chichester, Worcester and Sarum, and of Monsieur de Luzancy." Nye disclaimed the name "Unitarian," in a doctrinal sense, but he admitted that the English Unitarians had followed the methods of textual criticism adopted by the Socinians. He advances upon Locke's suggestion, by declaring that the belief of only one Article is enough to make a man a Christian, by which Article he means, "that Jesus is the Messiah."²

The pamphlets became even more numerous.³ A satirical piece appeared on account of the action taken by Mr. John Gailhard, who desired Parliament to intervene. It consisted of two letters, and the writer of the second refers to Gailhard's book, "which breathes a Calvinistic zealous affection."⁴ Sherlock issued another book, which contained a careful examination of the metaphysical questions involved, and in replying to Fowler, he remarked that if God thinks fit to reveal such things to us of which we have no ideas, we are obliged to believe them. Similarly, another writer, evidently an Independent minister, accepting the scriptural statement of Christ, and the God-Man, professed not to know how

1. *The Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, 1697.

2. *The Agreement of the Unitarians with the Catholic Church*, 1697.

3. *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England*, by William Stephens, 1696.

4. *An Apology for the Parliament, etc.*, 1697.

the two natures were united, but argued that as the comprehension of the fact was beyond our capacity, so it was not obliged to be understood.¹

An excellent piece of apologetic writing was published in 1699, by Peter Allix (1641—1717), who had founded a Church in London for Protestant refugees. He contended that the Socinian depreciation of the Old Testament was not fair, and that Christ's exhortation to search the Scriptures was purposeless, if they could only give a false notion of Himself.²

The English Socinians had felt the inconsistency in the scheme of Socinus, which permitted invocation to Christ,³ and, according to Allix, it was owing to this feeling that they had taken the name of "Unitarian." The modifications which the English "Unitarians" had made in the Socinian scheme, were not more rational or more agreeable to divine Revelation:—

"For to affirm that Christ received from God an infinite power to govern the world, without being essentially God, is to affirm a downright contradiction."

With this heritage of controversy, the eighteenth century opened in England.⁴ The Established Church was Protestant, but not united. The elements in its constitution were diverse, and the influences that maintained it were as much secular as sacred. As for the Dissenters, their position was described by a contemporary writer, in an

1. Joseph Taylor, *A Brief Enquiry*, 1698.

2. *The Judgment . . . Ancient Jewish Church*, 1699.

3. The Rev. Alex. Gordon has pointed out that to Socinus, adoration of Christ was, "the worshipful emotion of the heart, which was absent only in the case of the non-Christian"; while invocation was permitted to Christ as the sole mediator and the recipient of prayer.

4. Sherlock, *The Present State of the Socinian Controversy*, 1698.

exaggerated comparison, who declared that there were among them as many sects as there were beasts in the Ark. The population of England at the beginning of Queen Anne's reign, was under seven millions, and this figure included Wales. With the exception of Bristol and London, there were no large towns, or cities, while almost a fifth of the inhabitants were paupers. It was in this limited and difficult sphere that Protestantism had to make a secure foundation for itself, and it was evident that the ecclesiastical problems were sufficiently heavy and complex, without the further burden of theological dispute.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE ARIAN MOVEMENT.

ONE result of the Oxford decree of 1695 was the suppression of the discussion at that University, and its appearance at Cambridge. In the former university, ecclesiastics of the type of Francis Atterbury were trying to cast the Established Church from a Tory-Jacobite pattern.

At Cambridge, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, a remarkable group of men were studying the problems of the intellectual life. The textual work of Richard Bentley had given him a reputation, in and beyond the university. Bentley had discussed the classical text for the doctrine of the Trinity (I John, v, 7), and Newton's pamphlet, previously mentioned, was an incisive piece of work. A feature of the first decade of the eighteenth century which is likely to appear again in this century, was the interest taken by leading thinkers on the subject of theology. Locke whose realm was philosophy, Newton who was supreme in science, Clarke who was more a metaphysician than a theologian, Whiston the mathematician, and Bentley the classical scholar, were among the gifted men engaged in the problems of the Christian religion.

The Established Church had never subsided into a comprehensive unity. The disputes in Convocation created the terms "High Church," and "Low Church,"

the former representing the ultra-Episcopalian party, and the latter that party which retained its original Protestantism, and adopted a moderate attitude towards the Dissenters.

Of the Low-Church party a popular and able representative was Benjamin Hoadly (1676—1761), who during his lifetime ruled over four Sees. In 1707, when Prebendary of Salisbury, he preached a sermon at the assizes, which the jury ordered to be printed. He declared that there was nothing requisite to salvation, but repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. These were the principles of the Moderate man, and he reminded his hearers that Moderation had laid the design of the glorious Revolution, which saved England from two of the worst things in the world, poverty and slavery. The spirit and the language of the sermon were a contrast to the sentiment of Sacheverell's sermon at the Derby assizes, two years later. He described those "execrable miscreants Arius and Socinus, whose bodies though so many years rotten in their graves, still stink above ground." It is not surprising, that a preacher with such a power of picturesque invective was able to create a riot, in less than three months afterwards.

From the beginning of his career, Hoadly emphasised the ethical aspect of the New Testament. In his opinion, the Protestant position was that the terms of acceptance with God were definitely fixed in the Bible, and that the Church of England was only the medium and interpreter. The discourses which he delivered as rector of St. Peter's Poor, attempted to refute the popular errors which had grown around Calvinistic theology, or had sprung from it.¹ Almost in this very year Whitby was contributing a

1. *Hoadly's Discourses*, Fifth Edition, 1744.

new definition of Faith, which doctrine he took to mean “a mere assent to Gospel facts, as true.”¹

Hoadly allied himself with the position of Samuel Clarke, and although late in his career he insisted upon subscription from John Jackson, when he instituted him as Prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral, there is no doubt that Hoadly’s theological view of the Trinity was Clarkean.

The link between the Unitarian controversy at the close of the seventeenth century and the Arian Movement at the beginning of the eighteenth, was Thomas Emlyn (1663—1741). During his pastorate of the Presbyterian congregation in Dublin, where he was colleague with Joseph Boyse, he published a work that revived the old controversy, and carried the discussion into a new period.²

The book was the outcome of opinions which he had held for some time previously, and for which he had been “virtually dismissed” from his office. It created considerable attention, and the civil authorities taking the matter up, sentenced him to a year’s imprisonment, with power to extend the time until he had paid a fine of one thousand pounds. In that severe treatment, it is only fair to mention that Boyse, although a strong opponent of Emlyn, did not concur, and Emlyn attributed the action more to the Dublin ministers than to the Protestant Dissenters in England. Moreover, the indictment was on the ground of blasphemy, and not of heresy, and the condition of things in Ireland so recently after the Revolution Settlement, demanded a rigid adherence to the orthodox position, rather than the encouragement of a new

1. Whitby’s view of the Trinity became distinctly Clarkean, as may be seen in his *Last Thoughts*, 1727.

2. *An Humble Inquiry, etc.*, 1702.

theological position such as that which Emlyn had taken up. Emlyn replied from prison to a pamphlet which Boyse issued in 1704,¹ and upon his release, re-started the old controversy. Sherlock still continued to write, and Emlyn replied to him, publishing in the same year a defence of Bishop Fowler's view. In the following year, he replied to Leslie, the Non-juror.

From the beginning of the Arian Movement, Emlyn was in communication with Whiston and Samuel Clarke. With Clarke he was on terms of close friendship, and even in matters relating to ecclesiastical preferment, Clarke consulted him.

The Arian Movement began a long and uninterrupted course in England through the work and influence of two Cambridge scholars, differing greatly in calibre and temperament. William Whiston was a mathematician, and Samuel Clarke was a metaphysician, but both were determined to create a qualified primitive Christianity, especially on the subject of the Trinity. Whiston was one of the most consistent opponents of the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity. Receiving ordination in the Established Church, he eventually succeeded Sir Isaac Newton as Lucasian Professor. Becoming interested in historical Christianity, he published in 1708 an *Essay on the Apostolic Constitutions*. From that time until the year 1710, when he lost his Chair through Arianism, he carried on a stiff debate with the supporters of dogma and tradition. He scorned to apply the customary tactics of diplomacy, such as caution, reticence or ambiguity, and he is a notable instance of a man, who without counting

1. *Vindication of the True Deity, etc.*, 1704.

the cost, prepares himself to pay whatever price is necessary for liberty of opinion.¹

Whiston has narrated the development of his own position. Although acquainted with Newton and Clarke, he may be regarded as an independent thinker upon the subject. His friendship with Clarke began in a simple way, through a conversation he had with Clarke, in a coffee-house at Norwich in 1697, on the subject of Physics. Whiston recommended young Clarke to the Bishop of Norwich, who procured for him the two appointments of the rectorship of St. James', Westminster, and a chaplaincy to Queen Anne. In the year 1705, shortly after Clarke had delivered his famous lectures on "The Being and Attributes of God," Clarke confided to Whiston his suspicion that the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed was not the doctrine of the period of Athanasius. Whiston professes to have had no particular knowledge of the fact, at that time. Newton was aware of it, but Whiston is inclined to think that Clarke had discovered it for himself. Clarke had never read the Athanasian Creed in Church except once, by mistake, at Norwich.

In the year 1708, Whiston read over the history of the first two centuries of the Church, and received the impression that the Eusebian ("commonly called Arian") doctrine regarding the Person of Christ was the main belief at that period. He thereupon went to London to consult Samuel Bradford, D.D., Prebendary of Westminster, who was in sympathy with the simplification of all Liturgies, Benjamin Hoadly, who was then a London

1. Many years afterwards, when comparing his own attitude with that of Thomas Rundle (Bishop of Derry), he wrote that "before Mr. Rundle entered into holy orders, . . . he desired to proceed in my downright upright way, and to hazard all he had for promoting primitive Christianity."

rector, and Mr. Sydall, an examining chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich.¹

At the beginning of the year 1709, Whiston sent a portion of his MS. to John Sharp, D.D. (1645—1714), Archbishop of York, by means of Clarke. At the same time, he urged Clarke to act openly in the matter of his new views, and advised him to consult Newton, but he expressed the opinion that Clarke could not honestly promise to abstain from preaching and writing upon the questions he had raised.

It was in this way, through the medium of Whiston, that the profoundest personal force in English religion at the beginning of the eighteenth century came into prominence. Samuel Clarke, D.D. (1675—1729), was one of the earliest examples of the influence of Locke's philosophy and methods upon English Christianity. He had been educated at Cambridge, and became rector of St. James', Westminster, in 1709.

An interesting indication of Clarke's attitude of mind was revealed by the two questions which he propounded, upon qualifying for the degree of D.D. He took the affirmative in the subjects, (1) all Religion presupposes the freedom of human action; and (2) the Christian religion contains nothing contrary to Reason. Clarke had been greatly affected by the expulsion of Whiston, but kept silent, only intimating that he intended to publish his views on the subject of the Trinity. In the year 1712,

1. Whiston *Memoirs*, 2nd Edition, 1753. The name of John Gale, D.D., a Baptist minister in London is associated with that of Whiston, on account of his interest in Whiston's views, and from the fact that he was Chairman of "The Society for Promoting Catholic Christianity" which Whiston formed in 1715. Gale's sermons were published in four volumes in 1726.

he issued the most memorable work in the history of the Arian Movement.¹

Clarke had made a permanent reputation by his lectures on theology, and for seventy years after their publication this work was acceptable to the leaders of religion in England, during a century active in intellectual and speculative research.² In that book he used the *A priori* argument, in favour of religion, as Hobbes and Spinoza had used it against. The remarkable thing is that in his second book he took up a depreciatory and almost a condemnatory attitude towards metaphysics, especially with regard to its relationship to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Clarke's position was contained in fifty-five propositions, which deal exhaustively with his scheme. He takes it for granted that there is one supreme Cause, and Original of things; one simple, uncompounded, undivided, intelligent Agent or Person, who is the Author of all Being, and the Fountain of all Power. With this first and supreme Cause or Father of all things, there has existed from the beginning, a second Divine Person, which is His Word, or Son. With the Father and the Son, there has existed from the beginning a third Divine Person, which is the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

Having placed the supreme Cause in this supreme position, Clarke argued that absolutely supreme Honour could only be given to the Person of the Father; and

1. *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, wherein . . . the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour according to the Scriptures is proved and explained.* The first edition was in 1712, and a copy may be seen in the New College Library, Edinburgh. The second edition was in 1719, and copies are fairly numerous. The third (and last) edition was in 1732, and a copy is in the Dr. Williams' Library, London.

2. *On the Being and Attributes of God*, being the Boyle Lectures. 1704-5.

that for the same reason, all prayers and praises ought primarily or ultimately to be addressed to the Father. Whatever Honour was paid to the Son who redeemed us, or to the Holy Spirit who sanctified us, must always be understood as tending finally to the honour and glory of the Father, by whose good pleasure we are redeemed and sanctified.

More than a year passed before Clarke received any reply which in his estimation was of value, but in 1714, two years after its publication, the Lower House of Convocation drew the attention of the Upper House to the book. They complained that Clarke had wrested passages from the Prayer Book and the Articles with such subtlety, "as may both teach and tempt the unstable and insincere to comply with the law, and to subscribe, while they are propagating the very errors which Subscription was intended to check."

Clarke, evading this reference to his attempt to modify the traditional words, so as to make them bear the sense of Scripture, and concealing his change from the Athanasian position, answered that he had examined nine hundred texts, and had not been accused of having misinterpreted or misapplied one of them; nor had one of his fifty-five propositions been declared false or erroneous.

It looked as if Clarke had thrown Convocation against the horns of a dilemma in Protestant theology, and had prepared himself for a fight against an age-long tradition, but a few weeks afterwards he handed in an equivocal statement, which in the opinion of Whiston amounted to a new declaration; and in addition, he promised not to preach any more upon the subject, or to write anything contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. This recantation caused much disappointment among his

friends. Years afterwards, Whiston stated that Clarke bitterly regretted having signed a paper which the Lower House obtained from him. He refused preferment, and accepted in 1718, the position of Master of Wigston's Hospital, Leicester,¹ where subscription was not necessary.²

It was Clarke's method of dealing with the New Testament data, suggestive of the influence of Grotius and Locke, which (although new in English theology) made his conclusions almost inevitable. He was wishful to retain the doctrine of the Trinity, which he believed to be a Scripture doctrine, and this he did by receding from the position of the Church of England, and treating the primitive Fathers, not as authorities but as illustrations, and in substantiation of his propositions, which he based entirely on Scripture.

Clarke dealt with the difficult question of the extent to which the second and third Persons should be recognised in Christian worship, but, like Socinus, did not elucidate it. While demonstrating from his treatment of Scripture that the Son is subordinate to the Father, he granted that worship and honour must be paid to Him; and although the Holy Spirit was subordinate to the Father and the Son, worship or honour was due to Him.

Perhaps the least satisfactory part of Clarke's work was the way in which he avoided several of the greatest problems of Christology. He took it for granted that

1. This Charity, with its modern alms-houses and school, is still in existence.

2. In 1720, John Balguy (1686—1748) was persuaded by Hoadly not to publish *A Letter to Dr. Clarke*, on the ground that it would interfere with Clarke's promotion, and Clarke himself solicited Balguy. This is the more remarkable, as the Letter did not refer to the Trinity, but to the subject of Immortality, and the incident proves that in 1720 Clarke had not absolutely refused to subscribe, if ever he did. *Vide* article on Clarke, *Biog. Brit.*

there were three divine Persons, but declared that the proper *metaphysical* nature, essence or substance of these Persons is nowhere stated in Scripture, which always distinguishes them by their personal characteristics, offices, power and attributes. By this deft introduction of the word "metaphysical," Clarke suggested a contrast between the Scriptural and theological doctrine of the Trinity, and ignored the method which permitted the nature, if not the essence, of God to be inferred from His attributes.

Clarke declined to enter into the question of the pre-existent generation of the Son and of the Spirit, and unwilling to follow Arius, did not contribute as much as Arius to this difficult problem. He asserted that the Son and the Spirit existed from the beginning, emanating from the supreme Cause, but he suggested no reason for their existence. He maintained that Christ's metaphysical nature was an incomprehensible mystery, yet upon the slightest textual authority, he affirmed that Christ possessed a dignity from His metaphysical nature, which, to the glory of God, He laid aside.

In the "Scripture Doctrine," Clarke justly repudiated the charge of Arianism, being impatient with those who introduced the Arian formula; "there was [a time] when the Son was not," on the ground that it was beyond the teaching of Scripture. He was not, however, aware of any inconsistency in definitely affirming that there was not a time when the Word was not; and he accepted the theory of pre-existence, for the Word and the Spirit. Moreover, his scheme assumed a subordination of the Son, not in time, nor (apparently) in nature, (although he refuses to discuss this subject) but in the non-possession of supremacy and independence, which powers of the Father were incommunicable. It will be seen, therefore,

that although Clarke's scheme lessened some of the difficulties in the traditional formulary, it nevertheless left a number of important questions unsolved, and allowed to adhere to the Scripture doctrine as many metaphysical ideas as there were in the Athanasian Creed.

Clarke's difficulty had arisen from the simple fact that he no longer believed in the deity of Christ, as defined in the standards of the Church of England. It would have been a natural and consistent action for him to resign, but apparently this did not occur to him. He adopted the plan of proving that the theological and the Scripture doctrines of the Trinity were different. To say that there were unscriptural words in the Athanasian Creed was not a damaging statement, so long as he remained in a Church whose constitution was as much ecclesiastical as scriptural. It was the principle of a man who had another aim than that of absolute scriptural truth to affirm that a formulary could be accepted, were it possible to reconcile it in any sense with Scripture, and the weakness of Clarke lay in the fact that he did not act upon the results of his own premises.¹

1. The complete works of Clarke were published by his brother, John Clarke, D.D., with a Preface by Hoadly, in 1738.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WATERLAND—CLARKE CONTROVERSY.

CLARKE soon had as many friends as critics. Among the latter were Edward Wells,¹ D.D., Rector of Cotesbach, Lincolnshire, James Knight, D.D., St. John's College, Oxford,² Bishop Gastrell,³ John Edwards, D.D.,⁴ Edward Welchman, M.A.,⁵ John Potter, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, and Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Bennet, D.D., Rev. Richard Mayo,⁶ Edward Hawarden⁷ a Roman Catholic priest, and Daniel Waterland, D.D.

Among the friends were Daniel Whitby, Arthur Ashley Sykes, and John Jackson, with a number of anonymous writers.

Gastrell, who had taken part in the “Unitarian” controversy, was one of the first to reply to Clarke, and pointed out that the only proposition to which “the new Arian party” would take exception, were they asked to subscribe to Clarke's book was the twenty-seventh. He

1. *Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Introduction, etc.*, 1713; also *A Letter to Rev. Dr. Clarke, etc.*, 1713.

2. *The Scripture Doctrine of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity*, 1714.

3. *Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1714.

4. *Some Animadversions on Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine, etc.*, 1712.

5. *Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity Examined, etc.*, 1714.

6. *A Plain Scripture Argument against Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine*, 1715.

7. *An Answer to Dr. Clarke and Mr. Whiston, etc.* This writer, reversing his initials, put the letters H. E. on his title page, and did not publish until 1729.

remarked that Whiston and Clarke had no right to inveigh against the use of philosophy and human reason, "whose hypotheses are entirely philosophical, and very much out of the common way of reasoning." Clarke replied, repudiating the suggestion that his scheme could be ranked "in some Arian class," as he could with as much fairness rank Gastrell's scheme in some Socinian class, because it had a resemblance to the scheme of Socinus.¹

The chief opponent of Clarke, and the most distinguished defender of the orthodox position in the eighteenth century, was Daniel Waterland, D.D.² (1683—1740). He perceived that the strength of the "Subordinate" view was contained in Clarke's book, and he set himself to answer it, and to combat a lax interpretation of the formularies as hinted at by Clarke. His interest in the subject dated from at least the year 1713, when, prior to taking the degree of B.D., he debated the question of the lawfulness of Arian subscription, which method had increased since the publication of Clarke's book a few months before.

The practice had also been advocated by Arthur Ashley Sykes (1684?—1756), who entered the controversy about this time. After graduating at Cambridge, he was instituted vicar of Godmarsham in Kent, in the year that Clarke's "Scripture Doctrine" was published. Sykes, like Francis Hare,³ was affected by Clarke's teaching, and shortly after his induction to the living of Dry Drayton in Cambridgeshire, he published a work that attracted some attention.⁴ His design was to show how innocent a

1. *An Answer to the Remarks of Some, etc.*

2. Van Mildert's edition of Waterland's Works.

3. *The Difficulties and Discouragements which attend the Study of the Scriptures.* This pamphlet reached a seventh edition in 1716.

4. *The Innocency of Error*, by Eugenius Philalethes, 1714. A second edition in 1715, replied to criticism of the first edition.

thing it was to be mistaken in any matter where industry and honesty, diligence and sincerity had been applied to find out truth; affirming that God would never punish a man for his involuntary errors, if he had been sincere in his search after the Divine will.

In another pamphlet published a year later, he asserted that the Church of England had no uniform doctrine, and that members were not obliged to uniformity of opinion. This was not only an advocacy of Clarke's principle, but an indirect answer to Waterland.¹

In the year that Sykes issued this latter work, a book was issued by John Jackson (1686—1763), who was a lifelong supporter of Clarke's view.² He had studied at Cambridge, where he was acquainted with Clarke, and from 1708 had been the rector of Rossington, Yorkshire. In this book he attempted to answer the queries of Waterland regarding Clarke's scheme, and in consequence of his opinions was refused the degree of M.A. in 1718.

At this time, Thomas Bennet, D.D. (1673—1728), who had been following the controversy, published a discourse criticising the "Scripture Doctrine," and recommending a scheme which resembled Sabellianism.³ This tendency was pointed out by John Hughes, a Dissenting minister at Ware.⁴ Emlyn also replied to him, thus entering into the new period, and in the year 1719, Sykes returned to the defence of Clarke.⁵

The controversy became hot. In 1718, Clarke issued a

1. *The External Peace of the Church, etc.*, 1716.

2. *A Collection of Queries*, 1716. He had also supported Clarke's view in his *Examination of Mr. Nye's Explication of the Articles of the Divine Unity, etc.*, 1715. Nye's book had been published the previous year.

3. *A Discourse of the Trinity in Unity*, 1717.

4. *Remarks on Dr. Bennet's Discourse of the Trinity*, 1717.

5. *Dr. Bennet's New Theory of the Trinity*, 1717.

revised book of the Psalms in Metre, in which several new Doxologies were introduced.¹ A pastoral letter was written by the Bishop of London.² M. Mattaire supported the action of the Bishop, and Thomas Mangey, one of the Bishop's chaplains, preached and printed a sermon on the divinity of Christ. Sykes took the side of Clarke.³ Whiston also published a letter, whereupon the Bishop excluded him from St. Andrew's Church, Holborn.⁴ Waterland had replied to Jackson's book,⁵ and Sykes now felt constrained to publish an answer against Richard Mayo, which he had drawn up privately.⁶ In this book he compared the scheme of Clarke with Bennet, who, taking up the line of Wallis, had attempted to demonstrate the doctrine of the Trinity. His scheme was weak in parts, but it was an endeavour to maintain the orthodox position at a time when such an attitude was rare. The chief argument which Sykes used against Bennet was that his scheme was no more compatible with the original meaning of the Articles, than was the scheme of Clarke's. To this opinion Bishop Robinson replied, condemning the latitudinarian way of interpreting the Articles, as working for

1. One alteration was:—"To God, through Christ His Son our Lord, all glory be therefore."

2. *A Letter from the Lord Bishop of London . . . concerning their not using any New Forms of Doxology.* The date is Dec. 26, 1718.

3. *An Humble Apology for St. Paul*, by "Cornelius Paets."

4. *A Letter of Thanks to the Bishop of London*, Jan. 21, 1719. The discussion created a number of short pamphlets.

5. *A Vindication of Christ's Divinity*.

6. In addition to the use of his own name, Sykes also used the title of "A Lover of Truth and Peace," "A Gentleman of the Temple," "A Clergyman in the Country," "Cornelius Paets," "A Curate of London," and (when a Prebendary of Salisbury) the letters "T.P.A.P.O.A.B.I.T.C.O.S." Through his appointment at King's St. Chapel, he was able to use the titles "A Curate of London" and "A Clergyman in the Country," as he continued to hold the living of Dry Drayton. In the book referred to above, which was called *A Modest Plea for the Baptismal and Scriptural Notion of the Trinity*, Sykes used the *nom de plume* of "A Clergyman in the Country."

the destruction of that uniformity which was intended by their constitution.

The discussion was strengthened by the further action of Daniel Whitby, who had been long known as a scholar of great ability. In 1718, he published a small volume in which he criticised Bishop Bull's celebrated work on the Nicene Creed.¹ Waterland replied, pointing out that Bull had been dead nine years, and his book had been published thirty-three years; and charged Whitby with fallacies, defects, misquotations, misconstructions and misrepresentations. Whitby retorted by criticising Waterland's indeterminate use of the words "Person" and "Personality," and asking for the evidence from the ante-Nicene Fathers for the dogma of Consubstantiality, and for the co-equality of the Holy Spirit.²

The result of all this discussion was to create a deep unrest, within and without the borders of the Established Church. Conformist and Nonconformist were equally affected, for the Revolution Settlement had taken place only twenty years before, and Calvinistic as its basis was, it represented the general views of Protestant England at that time. The Exeter controversy among the Dissenters had its origin in the earlier controversy of Clarke and his followers, and the publication of the second edition of "Scripture Doctrine" in 1719, whether it was before or after the Salters' Hall Synod, cannot be dissociated from one of the greatest events in the history of Nonconformity.³

1. *Disquisitiones Modestae, etc.*, 1718. There is another criticism of this book in Waterland's *A Vindication of Christ's Divinity*, 1719.

2. *A Reply to Dr. Waterland's Objections*, 1720.

3. We are inclined to think that it was published immediately after the Synod.

CHAPTER V.

THE EXETER CONTROVERSY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the agitated state of the Established Church in the last decade of the seventeenth century, Nonconformity had not been affected to any marked degree. The ejected ministers still formed an important part of the Dissenting ministry, and they had paid too great a price for their convictions to hold them lightly, or to part with them easily.

The trend of events was, however, observed by them. Richard Frankland issued a lucid and learned tract on the subject, supporting the Oxford decree.¹ John Howe, another Presbyterian minister, published his "Calm Inquiry," and Isaac Mauduit made a small but interesting contribution to the controversy.² Matthew Smith of Mixenden, Yorkshire, by his heretical book had greatly disturbed old Oliver Heywood, who wrote to Timothy Jollie regarding Smith's depreciation of the doctrine of Justification.³ William Manning (1630 ?—1711), an ejected minister, residing at Peasenhall, Suffolk, was an early instance of Socinianism among the Nonconformists, and influenced Emlyn to some extent. Both he and Emlyn were dissatisfied with Sherlock's scheme, but arrived at different points of view.

In 1691, the consummation of the "Happy Union"

1. *Reflections on a Letter writ by a Nameless Author, etc.*, 1697 (Memorial Hall Library).

2. *Trinity* (Dr. Williams' Library).

3. *The True Notion of Imputed Righteousness* (Dr. Williams' Library).

between the Presbyterian and Independent ministers of London had taken place,¹ and similar associations were encouraged in the provinces, by means of which the differences in polity were modified.² It was an unfortunate coincidence, that in the year 1692, the anniversary of the death of Tobias Crisp took place. He had been a Wiltshire vicar, and had passed from a stage of vehement Arminianism to that of ultra-Calvinism. In commemoration of the fiftieth year since his death, Crisp's son published his father's sermons, and they became acceptable to the extreme sections of the Independents and the Baptists. The Presbyterians were afraid of strife, and one of their number, the celebrated Dr. Daniel Williams, took the matter up. Immediately it resumed a denominational character, Williams and Howe among others representing the moderate Presbyterians, and Isaac Chauncy and Stephen Lobb the extreme Independents. Lobb was charged by a contemporary writer of having used this "Antinomian" or "Neonomian" controversy to break up the Happy Union, out of good-will to the Jacobite interest.

In 1697, a deputation of Dissenting ministers waited upon William III, requesting him to forbid the printing of Socinian books. The action arose partly from a political eagerness to maintain the Revolution Settlement, but it also incidentally expressed the theological attitude of Nonconformity.

A good number of Nonconformist ministers had gone abroad to study, especially into Holland, and upon their

1. A copy of the *Heads of Agreement* is in the Dr. Williams' Library.

2. The standard book for the history of the Presbyterian Church of England is *The History of the Presbyterians in England*, by A. H. Drysdale, D.D., pub. 1889. The historians of Independency are numerous, including such names as Bogue and Bennett (1809), Dr. Stoughton, the late Dr. Dale and others, in addition to *The Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*.

return to England pursued the lines of liberal theology which they had taken up abroad, and which had already appeared in England through the teaching of Locke and Newton, and later, of Whiston and Clarke.

The origin of the Arian Movement among the Protestant Dissenters may be traced to Clarke's "Scripture Doctrine." It was read by many of them, as soon as it was published. Peirce, who was then at Newbury, and Samuel Bourn (*secundus*), who was ministering in the secluded village of Crook in Westmorland, are two instances of the far-reaching influence of this remarkable book.¹

The pamphleteering crusade that arose from the year 1719, was preceded by "The Occasional Papers," a series of articles written by eminent Protestant Dissenters on various topics.² Beginning with an essay in 1716, by Dr. Benjamin Grosvenor, they continued to the year 1719, the last one being written shortly after the Exeter controversy had commenced. Several of these articles related to questions that were about to become acute. One, for example, definitely stated that the Dissenters did not encourage any seditious behaviour, and that to prevent the abuse of liberty it was necessary to keep within the bounds of Scripture.³ This publication was followed by "The Independent Whig," in the four volumes of which the subjects of Authority, Reason, Scripture and Prelacy were discussed with much freedom and ability.⁴

1. Joseph Dodson of Penruddock, Cumberland, was another instance, and during his Farringdon ministry he became an intimate friend of Viscount Barrington. *Vide Twelve Discourses*, pub. 1726. A copy in the New College Library, Edinburgh.

2. The names of the writers are given in *The Protestant Dissenters' Magazine* for 1798.

3. *On the Abuse of Liberty*.

4. e.g., Vol. I, Article iv, on "The Explication of the Scripture" and Art. vi, on "Creeds and Confessions of Faith."

One of the two momentous episodes in the history of Nonconformity in England, was the story of the Exeter controversy. In the city of Exeter there were three congregations, which supported four ministers, and which were managed by a Committee of thirteen laymen who received collections for the work. At the time of the trouble, the names of the ministers were Joseph Hallett, senr., John Withers, James Peirce and John Lavington.¹ Of these four Peirce was the ablest, having studied first in England, and afterwards in Holland. He had been minister at Cambridge, where he was frequently in the company of Whiston, and upon the publication of the "Scripture Doctrine" (he being then at Newbury), he had accepted the views of Clarke.

The apologist on the orthodox side was John Enty, who succeeded Peirce in 1719 as assistant at James's Meeting. He had not the ability of Peirce, but he clearly saw the issue, and maintained the arguments of his own party with firmness and dignity.

The origin of the controversy was the private ordination of Hubert Stogdon, a fact which came to the ears of Lavington. For some years, Hallett had kept an academy at Exeter, and from the time of Peirce's settlement as assistant pastor to him, it was noticeable that a number of the students began to adopt the opinions of Whiston and Clarke. Stogdon, one of the students, had secretly read Clarke's book, probably at Peirce's suggestion, and having become convinced, sought ordination on the basis of the new theology. Peirce and several others gave

1. Hallett had been minister of James's Meeting since 1687, and Withers at Bow Meeting since 1705. Peirce was appointed assistant at James's Meeting in 1713, and Lavington assistant at Bow Meeting in 1715.

him a certificate which enabled him to obtain ordination at Shepton Mallet, Somersetshire, to the small congregation of Wokey, near Ashwick.

The incident occasioned some clamour, and Peirce paid a visit to London. During an absence of two months, his place at the Wednesday Lecture was taken by Henry Atkins, the minister of Puddington, who resided at Exeter. Atkins charged some of the Dissenters with -
damnable heresies, and spoke of them as "denying the Lord who bought them." Upon Peirce's return from London, he was asked to preach on the Satisfaction of Christ, which he did on June 2, 1718, taking for his text I John, ii, 2; and later, he was asked to preach a sermon on the Trinity, from I John, v, 7.

Peirce paid another visit to London, and shortly before he started, Lavington told him that the affair was to be brought before the September meeting of the Assembly of Devon and Cornwall. When Peirce returned, he found "a mighty stir." Lavington had changed his friendly attitude, and Ball of Honiton, with Walrond of Ottery St. Mary, "became exceedingly warm" during a meeting in Walrond's house to arrange matters. Several points were agreed upon by both parties, but Peirce stated that he would not give a declaration of the Trinity according to the first Article of the Church of England. When the Assembly met from September 9th to the 11th, it was as a divided house. Things were not improved by two sermons which were preached, an orthodox one by William Palk, and one by Matthew Huddy, who also refused to make any declaration.¹ The latter maintained two propositions; that what was not contained in the

1. By a majority, the Assembly declined to thank him for the sermon, but he afterwards published it.

Bible was not any part of the Christian faith, and must be disclaimed; and that whatever was necessary to salvation was in the Scriptures. The Assembly, after an animated discussion, decided that they should make a declaration concerning the errors relating to the Trinity. An unsuccessful attempt was made to pass a motion, that the declaration might be made in the words of Scripture. Several refused to make any declaration at all, one being Isaac Gilling of Newton Abbot, and the proceedings became confused. The scribe wrote out the minute at Lavington's dictation, which stated that the general sense of the meeting concurred in the opinion that there is One God, and that the Father, Word and Holy Ghost are that One God. From a remark which Peirce subsequently made, it appeared that the voting was about two to one. At this meeting a letter was introduced from Tong of Salters' Hall, London, in a reply to a communication by Walrond. Peirce then tried to read a letter which he had received from London; but as he would not divulge the name of the writer, he was not allowed to do so. In November of this year, the Committee of Thirteen entreated the Exeter ministers to give them satisfaction in one of three ways; either to sign the first Article of the Church of England, or to give the answer to Question VI of the Assembly's Catechism, or to make a declaration of the Trinity in their own words, similar to the formula of the September Assembly. Peirce then and there declared for the subordination of the Son, and from that time omitted from public worship the Doxology at the end of the metrical Psalms. The members of the Exeter congregations thereupon consulted some London ministers, who cautiously advised them to confer with the neighbouring ministers. Throughout the winter attempts were

made to reconcile the parties, but without effect. On March 4, 1719, seven local ministers met at Exeter for the second time, and requested an interview with the four Exeter ministers. An appeal was made to the Exeter ministers, for a definite statement on the subject of the Person of Christ. Peirce evaded the appeal by asking the seven ministers to wait for the decision from London, but they declined the proposal. Withers eventually expressed his willingness to own that Christ and the Father were One, but not One God. Hallett also refused more than this. Lavington gave his assent to the traditional view. Withers offered Bishop Pearson's views, and later, the Nicene Creed, but ultimately to the surprise of Peirce and others, Withers, whose ecclesiastical views were moderate and conciliatory, accepted the First Article of the Church of England.

Five days after this interview, an inflammatory tract was circulated through the city.¹ It created such an impression, that the next day March 10, 1719, Peirce and Withers were excluded from Bow and James' Meetings. It is a matter of importance to discover by whose authority this action was taken. Peirce had endeavoured to get a vote of the congregation upon the matter, by maintaining that as the house was built at the common charge, the trustees were made proprietors from a legal necessity. One of the trustees whom Peirce interviewed, said that a majority might be obtained by means of the small payers, but they were resolved to retain the

1. *Arius Detected and Confuted* (a copy in the New College Library, Edinburgh). This was after the publication of (1) *An Answer to Mr. Trosse*; (2) *A Letter to a Dissenter in Exeter* (written by Peirce); (3) *The Innocent Vindicated*. It was answered by, *Plain Christianity Defended*.

Meeting-houses, and to have the ministers whom they liked, let the majority be ever so much against them. This action of those who managed the temporal affairs of the congregation operated to the disadvantage of the progressive party, but it is worth observing that from the time of this incident, that party began to acknowledge the power of the trustees, who eventually came to have control of the internal affairs of Presbyterian congregations.

The Sunday following the ejectionment Peirce preached a sermon at the opening of the new Meeting-house, in which he repudiated the name of "Arian," and declared that he was not going to preach upon speculative points, but upon plain and undisguised Christianity as it was contained in the Scriptures. The discussion was continued by Peirce and Enty; the latter assuring Peirce that the mob had not received the word "Arian" from the orthodox party, but from Stogdon. He asked Peirce what he would do, if someone seeking ordination were to state that he had come to the opinion of Socinus, on the basis of Scripture, and it is not surprising in view of the comparatively conservative position which he took, that Peirce was unwilling to face this awkward question. Peirce's utterances became more candid than his earlier ones, and criticising the term "Subsistence," used in the Westminster Assembly's Confession, he declared his preference for the Apostles' Creed. He stated that he at first avoided Clarke's "Scripture Doctrine," until, at the reproach of a friend, he bought it, together with five volumes of Whiston's "Primitive Christianity." While he would not accept the name of Arian, his view nearly approached that of Arius, whom he suggested might perhaps, as much as Athanasius, be canonised for a saint at the next reformation of the Calendar! He was of the opinion, that

the only medium between Sabellianism and Tritheism was the scheme which he had embraced:—

“ For either the Father, Son and Spirit are three Beings, or they are not; if they are three Beings, and each has the same perfections, Tritheism seems to me to be unavoidable . . . on the other hand, if they are not three Beings, they can only be three names or modes of the same Being, and this is Sabellianism.”¹

1. The pamphlets in this controversy are numerous, but are accessible at a number of libraries, especially at the Dr. Williams' Library. The fullest accounts are given by Peirce, in *The Case of the Ministers Ejected at Exeter, The Evil and Cure of Divisions, The Western Inquisition, and Inquisition-Honesty Display'd*. A valuable pamphlet which contains the tracts and pamphlets issued on the subject from 1712 to 1719, is *An Account of all the considerable Books and Pamphlets that have been wrote on Either Side, etc.* It was compiled by Thomas Hearne, the antiquarian (1678-1735), who supported Clarke. A copy of this work is in the New College Library, Edinburgh.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SALTERS' HALL SYNOD.

IT will be recalled, that communications had passed between both parties at Exeter and friends of each party in London. In November, 1718-19, two months after Tong's letter had been sent to the Devon and Cornwall Assembly, the Committee of Thirteen pressed for a doctrinal declaration from the Exeter ministers, but were unsuccessful. They thereupon entered into correspondence with some of the London ministers, and this may be taken as the time when the Exeter controversy was transferred to London.

In one of the letters sent from Exeter to a London minister, a graphic account was given of the agitated state of religious life in Exeter, where it appeared "as if it would be the glory of Nonconformity to end in Arianism." The minister was so impressed with this information, that he showed the letter to others. At a meeting of ministers, Mr. Tong of Salters' Hall, a Presbyterian, and Mr. Foxon of Haberdashers' Hall, an Independent, were requested to draw up an answer, and a general meeting of the London ministers was called. Notice was given to the ministers of the Three Denominations. The reply to the private letter was addressed to Walrond of Ottery, on August 25, 1718-19, by the unanimous consent of the twenty-five ministers present, who without exception were of the conservative party. The advice in the letter, and the spirit of it were alike

admirable. While admitting some apprehension on the subject, they declared that they knew of none among them who had openly avowed such errors, and stated that the number of those who were in doubt about such doctrines was very small. Declaring that they did not know the local circumstances, they made general suggestions to the effect that none should be suspected without good ground, that time should be given to the favourers of the new notion, that such as were affected should be warned and told that they could not be ordained, and that if they were already in the ministry, it would be a necessary duty to warn people regarding them. The letter was signed by Tong, and also by Robinson, another Presbyterian minister who had acted as Moderator, and who added a postscript saying that it was with great reluctance he had gone into the chair on such an important occasion. The London ministers were mainly Presbyterian and "Congregational" ministers; and at this period the Presbyterians were the conservative party. On November 22, 1718-19, a letter was sent to London by the Exeter committee. The London ministers hesitated to reply, deeming it a matter for the Devon and Cornwall Assembly. Eventually, they wrote on January 6, 1718-19, saying that they were afraid to go beyond the bounds of Order, although it must not be implied that they were deserting Christianity. The letter was signed by Robinson, Tong, Reynolds, Smith and Calamy. In a later communication the Exeter congregations sent up three proposals, to the effect that error was sufficient ground of withdrawal; that the denial of the divinity of Christ was such an error, and that it was the duty of all to withstand those ministers who made this denial. They asked the London ministers if they could not see their way to

subscribe, to give their consent to these proposals, and this alternative suggestion was heartily adopted.

About this time, a number of London gentlemen who were anxious for the cause of Protestant Dissent, issued an appeal with the object of healing the division, and also placed before the Committee of the Three Denominations, "A Paper of Advices." Three weeks afterwards, a meeting was held in Salters' Hall. The subject on the agenda was a communication from Exeter. The London ministers had by this time divided into two parties, the action probably having been hastened through the resignation of Martin Tomkins of Stoke Newington, whose Arianism was avowed. The two sections of the meeting came together with different points of view. The conservative party thought that the pre-eminent subject of discussion was the safeguarding of the doctrine of the Trinity. The other party, progressive in theology, but from a modern estimate, very conservative in its view of Scripture, desired the Bible alone, "the inspired writing, in the very letter thereof," to be made a standard of Faith and a test of membership. Again, the conservative party argued that subscription to the Trinity was an essential boundary of Faith and Communion. The progressive party replied that the question was not one of individual belief, but whether human interpretations of the Scriptures (and they had come to regard Creeds as such) should be made a test of Christian communion. These were the fundamentals of the two parties at Salters' Hall, and although not discussed during the meeting, the principles of each were tacitly recognised by the other.

This memorable meeting of February 24, 1718-19, began with a consideration of the Exeter letter, and the

parties were able to agree in the views that errors in important doctrine obliged congregations to withdraw from their ministers; that the people have a right to judge for themselves what those errors are; that charity should be extended, in case of doubt; and that certainty of accusation should be assured, before any procedure was taken.

Up to this point there had been harmony in the meeting, but the contentious matter now appeared. A resolution embodying the views of the conservative party, and advocating subscription, was put to the meeting, "only after a great deal of bustle, heat, invective and overbearing treatment." The conservatives appeared to have the majority, but a division was insisted upon. While the progressives were making for the gallery, someone cried, "You who are against persecution, come upstairs!" This was responded to by the counter-cry, "You that are for the Trinity, stay below!" These two sentences characterised both parties, and contained the sentiments of the majority of each side. No doubt some of the progressive party felt the force of the argument of the conservative party, regarding the doctrinal issue, and others on the conservative side felt the force of the argument on the progressive side, on the question of liberty; but the one party believed they were fighting against intolerance, and the other against heresy.

When the votes were counted, the figures were fifty-seven to fifty-three, the progressives having a majority of four. The conservatives were much annoyed, and Thomas Bradbury, the minister of New Court, their leader, called it a scandalous majority.¹

1. A caricature of the Salters' Hall Synod is reproduced in a recent illustrated edition of Green's *Short History, etc.*, Part XXIX, p. 1334.

The meeting adjourned until March 3rd, and upon resuming, the conservative party said that they had resolved to sign forms of subscription to the Trinity singly, an action which was in accordance with the motion they had made at the previous meeting. The subscribers went into the gallery, presumably thinking themselves in the minority; yet when subscription had taken place, the subscribers were sixty in number and the non-subscribers fifty.

The subscribers then withdrew, and the progressive party proceeded to draw up *Advices for Peace*, in answer to the request from Exeter, which really was the particular business before the meeting. They had already agreed at the February meeting upon three propositions. At this March meeting they drew up a fourth Article, and wishing the opinion of the conservative brethren upon it, they again adjourned the meeting for a week.

At the meeting of the Synod on March 10th, the conservative party were not present, and a week afterwards, four *Articles* were sent to Exeter. In a letter which accompanied them, the progressive party wrote that they were calculated for peace, so as to secure truth with it, and that they had the approval of a large number of the London laity. Hereupon followed a cryptic declaration that they utterly disowned the Arian doctrine, and sincerely believed the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, and the proper divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, which they apprehended to be clearly revealed in Scripture; but they would not condemn any one who were with them in the main, who would make their declaration only in Scripture terms.

This declaration was framed to meet the exigencies of the occasion, and enabled the whole of the progressive

party to accept it. Its value depended upon the phrase, "*proper* divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ," the new party maintaining that the Athanasian formulay did not represent the proper divinity. In addition, there was the apparently harmless acceptance of brethren who appeared to be "with us in the main," but as the conservative party pointed out, if such a general attitude of friendliness were permitted, together with the advice sent to Exeter, it would be easy to exchange pulpits between Trinitarians and anti-Trinitarians. There were several omissions in the declaration, such as a reference to the Holy Ghost, and to the unity of the three Persons in the Divine nature, and the declaration "fixed every one's eye upon the new scheme of divinity taught by Dr. Cl."

It must be said that the progressive party had exhausted every reason that could be given against subscription, except the primary one, which was that some of their number had already seceded from the traditional view of the Trinity. The Salters' Hall Synod, however, raised another issue than that of the Trinity. A number of most distinguished Nonsubscribers were undoubtedly fighting for the principle of Protestant liberty, and the right of private judgment on matters which did not enter into the substance of the Faith. When the metaphysical mystery of the Trinity was compared, as frequently it was, with the ecclesiastical mystery of Transubstantiation, it was only to be expected that the upholders of the Protestant tradition should free their doctrine from the possibility of such an odious comparison. On the other hand, there was another group who were not at the time concerned about the larger subject of liberty, but having passed to a new point of view through the reading of Clarke's book, they began to realise that it was inadvisable

to commit the Protestant party to a position which would prevent unlimited expansion of view.

The Salters' Hall controversy was the cause of cleavage between the Presbyterians and the Independents.¹ The Synod had resolved itself into Subscribers and Non-subscribers, and while there were Presbyterians and Independents in each section, the Presbyterians retained the position of the Nonsubscribers with more consistency than the Independents, until, about the middle of the century, the word "Independent" signified a certain adherence to the doctrinal standards of the Westminster Assembly, and "Presbyterian" became synonymous with liberty of opinion, and even with laxity of doctrine.

1. Joseph Stedman's *Presbyterian Priest-Craft*, 1720, is a piece of writing which arose out of circumstances not likely to give him an impartial view.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER SALTERS' HALL SYNOD.

It will be evident from what has been written, that the year 1719 was one of the most eventful in the history of English Protestantism. Exactly thirty years had passed since the Revolution Settlement, and it looked as if the Protestant principle was about to destroy traditional Christianity, with a thoroughness that was alarming. The issue of Clarke's second edition of "Scripture Doctrine" took place in this year, and with several significant alterations in it, was even more acceptable than the first. At this period the Dissenters were endeavouring to free themselves from a crude Calvinism, and to enunciate the Protestant principle of individual freedom; while a scholarly party in the Established Church, encouraged by Sykes and Clarke, were endeavouring to accept the formularies of the Church, and to give a sophistical subscription to them.

Waterland, who had perceived the move of the Clarkeans, returned to the question which he had debated at Cambridge in 1713, and published an excellent pamphlet on the subject of Arian subscription. He pointed out the omissions in Clarke's second edition, and remarked that he could therefore do no more than enter a caveat against those who used Clarke's name.¹ In an admirable

1. *The Case of Subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, etc.*, 1721. Disney, writing in 1785, from a Unitarian standpoint, expressed the opinion that Waterland had the advantage of the argument, and that Sykes was never able to prove that the XXXIX Articles would in their usual grammatical meaning bear an Arian sense. Whiston, who was in the thick of the conflict, expressed, with his usual directness of style, that Sykes's attempt was a vain endeavour "to wash a black-amoor white."

passage he reminded his opponents that as the Church required subscription according to her own interpretation, so a man is bound; and if he knowingly subscribes contrary, he commits a fraud.¹

In Protestant Dissent, a feeling of sadness and disappointment followed the Salters' Hall Synod.² The event had shattered the high hopes entertained by many that the Dissenters would continue to increase their original prestige, and ultimately become the dominant party in the State. Friends of the Dissenting Interest were eager to pilot it through the channels of sectarianism, into a larger expanse of usefulness. Political power had come to it unsought, by reason of the wealth of its members, many of whom belonged to the trading classes; and it was even hinted that political enmity had fostered the partisan spirit which arose at Salters' Hall.³

The position of the Nonsubscribers was a difficult one, and they behaved with consistency and dignity. They had been compelled to stand with a heterodox party, in the interests of religious liberty and the right of private judgment. Several of the prominent men made their position clear by means of sermons, which were published, one being by Joshua Oldfield, D.D.⁴ A valuable contribution to the subject was made by Benjamin Bennet,

1. Hearne asserted that Clarke omitted this portion, not because he did not believe in that ambiguous way of subscribing.

2. An element of discord began to appear among the Dissenters, which is referred to, in writings such as *An Essay concerning Truth and Charity*, by Thos. Ridgley, 1721.

3. The discussions relating to the Test and Corporation Acts produced many pamphlets, some of which are contained in two volumes in the New College Library, Edinburgh. It is clear that politics were playing an active part in Protestant Dissent at this time, and while the Dissenters in the provinces were eager for a repeal of these Acts, the London Dissenters (who controlled the Funds) considered the action to be ill-timed.

4. *A Brief Practical and Specific Discourse, etc.*, 2nd edition, 1721.

(1674—1726), who adapted Chillingworth's argument regarding Episcopacy, and declared that the doctrine of the Trinity was not plain enough in Scripture to be a fundamental. This he applied to the Arian scheme, as much as to the Athanasian, and even to the "refined Arianism" of Clarke, "which supposes a sort of intermediate Being." Bennet's conclusion is that "Catholicism" is the certain and only way of peace and union among Christians. Prayer should be made that "Catholicism" may prevail, and that the invidious names of sects and parties may be abolished.¹

In the same way, Edmund Calamy, D.D. (1671—1732), another Nonsubscriber, endeavoured to subdue the controversy by preaching a course of sermons. Advocating the "Old Scheme," he reminded the advanced party that they were laying too much stress on the historical statement that Scripture was the only Rule of Faith; and remarked that the tenour of Scripture must also be observed.²

In the Established Church, the question was debated chiefly by Clarke, Jackson, Whitby and Sykes on the one hand; and Waterland on the other. Each of the four was writing singly against Waterland, Clarke also being joint-author with Jackson and Sykes.³ After the conclusive pamphlet by Waterland on Subscription, the discussion resumed its old form. Waterland followed up his "Vindication" with a history of the Athanasian Creed, a book that on account of its able and impartial examination of that formulary, is still acceptable to those

1. *Irenicum*, 1722. It is important to observe that he limits the discussion to "the disputed portion of the Trinity."

2. *Vide* especially the last sermon, preached at Salters' Hall Lecture, Sept. 6, 1720, on "The Old Paths" (Jer. 6, 16).

3. The only woman who took part in the Arian Movement was Catharine Cockburn (1679—1749). The interest which Queen Caroline took in theology is explained, chiefly by the Arian Movement.

who prefer the conservative view of this subject.¹ The following year, that is in 1723, Jackson published a reply to Waterland under a new *nom de guerre*, and shortly afterwards, Clarke sent out an anonymous pamphlet, written in the same strain. Waterland had not a great degree of respect for Jackson's sincerity or scholarship, and did not acknowledge his contribution, but he replied to Clarke.²

Although the decision of the Salters' Hall Synod marked a definite stage in the story of the Arian Movement, a large body of public opinion still remained to support the conservative ministers. Gradually, signs appeared which proved that the "New Scheme" men had won a permanent victory.³ Here and there a book was issued which quietly changed the attitude of many on the subject. One of these was the *Miscellanea Sacra* of Viscount Barrington (John Shute Barrington, 1678—1734). This distinguished politician for years had been esteemed by the Dissenters, and although a Churchman, he attended the meeting-house at New Court, London, until his dispute with the minister, Thomas Bradbury, at the time of the Salters' Hall Synod, when he went to Jeremiah Hunt, of Pinners' Hall. Barrington's book reflected the spirit and ideals of Locke, and from it George Benson afterwards drew much material for his volume on Christianity.⁴ An instance of the way in which Noncon-

1. *Vide The Tutorial Prayer Book.* (The Harrison Trust, 1912.)

2. Many details will be found in two works by Jackson, viz., *Christian Liberty Asserted*, 1734, by "A Clergyman in the Country," and *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr. Waterland*, by "A Clergyman," 1736.

3. It had been customary to receive a Confession of Faith from Dissenting ministers before ordination, and the change in the character of it is well illustrated in that delivered by T. Newman, in 1721 (Dr. Williams' Library).

4. *History of the Christian Religion.*

formist ministers were being influenced by Conformist theologians is seen in the "Essay" of Daniel Scott, LL.D. (1694—1759). The first edition was published in 1725, and the second edition in 1738.¹ These two editions differed greatly from each other. In the first edition, there appeared a long letter to Clarke. In the second edition, that letter was omitted, and the essay enlarged to three times its original size. In the latter edition there was a complimentary preface to Waterland, and to his "masterly performances," who, when the first edition was published, was not generally known. Another interesting paragraph in the second edition states that Scott has called his work an "essay," because if it should fall short of a strictly mathematical demonstration, he hopes that it will deserve the title of an essay towards it; "and there is sometimes in moral probabilities, an irresistible strength that is little short of the strictest demonstration."

Still more striking, is the way in which the steady influence of Waterland upon Scott can be traced. While the theological view of the second edition is unchanged, it is much more cautiously worked out, and it is evident that Waterland's arguments had weakened the influence of Clarke upon Scott. It was during this decade, that the Movement passed into an academic stage. The Scripture began to be examined afresh, and the classical texts for the cardinal doctrines criticised with magnificent ability. Lardner's work in this direction is an outstanding feature of the period, and another important book, from which

1. *An Essay Towards a Demonstration of the Scripture Trinity*, by "Philanthropus Londin."

Benson derived considerable assistance, was published by Jeremiah Jones (1693—1724).¹

The tendency to a simplification of theological opinion was illustrated by the contribution of Benjamin Chandler, in which the influence of Clarke is evident.² The Dissenters in the West were becoming Arian; but an illustration of a middle position may be seen in the lecture delivered at Exeter by Thomas Jeffery, who in trying to guard against the two extremes of the figurative and the eternal Sonship of Christ, introduced the idea of the divinity, as distinct from the deity.³

The Waterland-Clarke controversy subsided, partly from the fact that Clarke's view was gaining ground in the Established Church. For some years (1721–30), Waterland was engaged in the duties of the parish of St. Austin's, London, and probably preached the sermons there which he afterwards published. It was not until 1734, that his largest and most valuable work appeared,⁴ "occasioned by some recent pamphlets," the chief one being by an anonymous writer, who was afterwards known to be Simon Browne, a Dissenting minister.

Jackson replied to Waterland, adopting a more aggressive attitude to the Trinity, describing it as a mere fiction first brought into the Church through a wilful corruption of the doctrine of the Nicene Council, and which, even when "refined by Dr. W." appears "shocking to a Christian." This attack was followed by a severer one in a subsequent book, which is one of the ablest and

1. *New and Full Method of settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, 1726.

2. *The Apostles' Creed Better than the Assembly's Catechism*, 1720.

3. *The Divinity of Christ proved from Holy Scripture*, 1726.

4. *The Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity Asserted*.
Jackson's reply was *Christian Liberty Asserted*.

most personal in the history of the Arian Movement. Through it, and the support that Sykes and Jackson gave to Clarke, the heretical views of the party were greatly helped.¹

Jackson's way of handling his argument was usually accelerated by the piquancy of personal references which he imparted, writing mostly under an assumed name. His work cannot be compared with that of Sykes in academic value, and occasionally there is the suspicion that Sykes was writing down Clarke's own replies to his critics.

1. Page 63, note 2.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ACADEMIES.

ONE of the most lamentable incidents in the story of English ecclesiastical strife, was the exclusion of Non-conformists from the two ancient seats of learning. Cambridge, once the home of Puritanism and liberal thought, was closed to those refusing to submit to statutes which the Act of Uniformity made rigid. Oxford had also become exclusive, and was a shrine for the worship of Jacobite ideals. In the eighteenth century, learning at these academic centres was low in standard.¹ It was therefore not in this respect that the Dissenters suffered any deprivation, for the quality of their own education was generally higher than that of Oxford or Cambridge. In those parts of England where Nonconformity was influential, seminaries of learning sprang up, that succeeded in making a valuable contribution to the intellectual life of the eighteenth century. It was a misguided policy to close the Universities against the Dissenters. Intellect, like water, always finds its own level, and restriction more often assists than hinders. The Dissenters turned with earnest concentration of mind, to the preservation of their own principles. The action of the Universities had prevented not only the Dissenting ministers from entering their precincts, but also the sons of parents who took a pride in maintaining the Nonconformist tradition. In the hands of the Dissenters lay the

1. Particulars in T. R. Green's *Oxford Studies* and a recent volume by Mr. A. D. Godley.

trade of England, and in addition to their wealth, they represented one quarter of the population in 1701. The material loss to Oxford and Cambridge, was gain to the academies. The sons of rich and influential tradesmen entered them, unfettered by ecclesiastical bias, and stimulated by the scientific spirit that early possessed the century. It is a fact which some may be slow to believe, that many of the scientific discoveries of the eighteenth century were made in the Dissenting academies of England, or by the students in their subsequent careers.

In the present sketch it is not necessary to refer to the academies that provided education for the first generation of Dissenters, but to define the relationship of the eighteenth century academies to the Arian Movement. A name that belongs to the older group, is that of the Rev. Richard Frankland, M.A., whose work for the youth of Nonconformist parents is memorable in the story of Northern Nonconformity. His academy in Yorkshire, and in Westmorland, was one of the first in England. His orthodoxy was undoubted, but his methods and his views indicate an unusual degree of breadth for the times.

At the time of Frankland's death, his academy was at Rathmell, Yorkshire, and an attempt was made to continue it at Attercliffe Hall, by Timothy Jollie (1659?—1714). Although the training was circumscribed, a number of able men received their education at Attercliffe, among whom were Bowes, a Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Saunderson (who was blind) the successor of Whiston, in the Chair of Mathematics at Cambridge, and Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

An interesting link between the old and the new academies was the academy of Messrs. Chorlton and Coningham, at Manchester. The former was a Frank-

land student; the latter a graduate of Edinburgh University, and originally a licentiate of the Church of Scotland.¹

About this time, a discussion arose upon the effect of the academies on the Established Church. An attack was made on them by Samuel Wesley (1662–1735), the father of the famous family, who had originally been educated for the Independent ministry. A vigorous reply was given by Samuel Palmer, in the same year, and a “Defence” of his letter was issued by Wesley in 1704. The discussion was continued until the year 1707, and an examination of the pamphlets discloses interesting particulars regarding the academies of that period.

From the year 1689, when Protestant Dissent was legalised, a tolerant spirit and a moderate theology were the prevailing characteristics of that section of English Christianity. As the century proceeded, each academy became more advanced, and although the Independents from about 1730 used their funds for the support of academies less advanced than those which the Presbyterians were supporting, such academies were only relatively orthodox.

Progressive theology began about the time of the establishment of “Attercliffe Hall.” Two accounts of this academy have come down to us, and the impression left is that Jollie permitted a wider theological outlook to his students, than Frankland had done. Those students who had been with Frankland at the time of his death, were divided between the academies at Manchester and Attercliffe. Jollie was succeeded by John Wadsworth, whose liberal policy had an effect upon Chorlton and Coningham’s academy, and it was ultimately dissolved.

1. He was previously minister of the Penrith Presbyterian Meeting-house, Cumberland, and afterwards was at Haberdashers’ Hall, London.

The Attercliffe academy in time gave way to the celebrated academy at Findern, in Derbyshire. It had originated with Thomas Hill, whose system of theology was Baxter's "End to Doctrinal Controversies," a book which advanced what was described as "Baxterian" views. It was under Ebenezer Latham, M.D., a student of Benion of Shrewsbury, that the Findern academy attained a high position. He was a man of much learning, and during his career had four hundred students under him, although only a small number entered the Dissenting ministry. It is noteworthy, that for the greater portion of Latham's tutorship, a quiet and cautious liberalism was acceptable to the Protestant Dissenting congregations. This was partly owing to the spread of broader views, by means of those who had studied in Holland, and partly from the fact that Calvinism was losing its power.

The academy of John Jennings of Kibworth (later at Hinckley) was well supported. Jennings was orthodox, but Doddridge, who was a student there, wrote that Mr. Jennings encouraged the greatest freedom of enquiry, and always inculcated it as a law, that the Scriptures were the only genuine standard of faith. He added, that Jennings did not follow the doctrines or phrases of a particular party, but was sometimes a Calvinist, and at other times an Arminian, or a Baxterian Calvinist, as truth and evidence determined him.

Findern academy affected the institution of James Owen, of Shrewsbury, as well as that of Samuel Jones, at Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. Upon the appointment of Samuel Benion, M.A., B.D., as the successor of Owen, the Shrewsbury academy was modelled on the lines of the University of Glasgow, for which Benion had a great admiration. He died in March, 1708, after a few months'

work, and his son David, intended to continue the academy at Shrewsbury. Jennings, the tutor of Doddridge, had praised his promising pupil, and Doddridge, with academic ambitions, had drawn up what he considered to be an up-to-date curriculum. The younger Benion also died. Saunders of Kettering saw the plan of Doddridge, and showed it to Dr. Watts, who, with others, agreed that the one who had drawn it up should carry it out.

It was in this way that Doddridge's academy originated in 1729, first at Market Harborough, Leicestershire, and afterwards at Northampton. He continued the tradition of Jennings, but with more ability than his old tutor, and his mediate methods were the means of linking up the new with the old.¹ His students were acceptable in various parts, and the transition of Lancashire to Unitarianism was greatly assisted by the Doddridge students. His acceptability as a tutor was not confirmed by the London Protestant Dissenters. The Arian party did not appreciate Doddridge's views, and Mr. Coward, inclined to orthodoxy, disliked his moderate opinions, as later, his trustees did.

Three excellent academies in the North of England were those of Whitehaven (Thomas Dixon, M.A., M.D.), Kendal (Caleb Rotheram, M.A., D.D.), and Warrington. Dixon, a student of Chorlton and Coningham, was minister of the united congregation of Presbyterians and Independents at Whitehaven. His academy was not large, but four of his students afterwards played an important part in the Arian Movement. These were John Taylor from Lancaster, Henry Winder from Penruddock, Cumberland,

1. Prior to the time of Doddridge, academy lectures had been delivered in Latin, but Doddridge, himself a fine Latin scholar, abolished the practice. After the trial of John Simson, the theological lectures at Glasgow University were delivered in English.

Caleb Rotheram and George Benson, both from Great Salkeld, Cumberland.

The Kendal academy maintained by Caleb Rotheram in that town was one of the best of the eighteenth century academies. A man of fine character, whose academy gave an impetus to intellectual and scientific studies, quite as much as to theological, Rotheram's progressive influence had a potent effect in fixing Arian views in the Dissenting pulpits of Lancashire.

Warrington academy was preceded by that of the Daventry academy, under the tutorship of Caleb Ashworth, D.D. (1722-75). He was a man about whom there are few personal particulars, as, at his own request, nothing of this character was published. In taking up the work in 1752, he wrote to Job Orton upon points of management. Orton replied that the students who had been transferred from Doddridge's academy would give respect to Ashworth, but he feared that they, like others, while thinking themselves wise, would probably show themselves great fools. He advised Ashworth that if he perceived anything of this kind, not to see it. He warned him of Doddridge's error of saying fine things to, and of almost everybody. Ashworth was an old student of Doddridge's and endeavoured to carry on the traditions of Northampton academy. Priestley, who was the first new student of Daventry academy, has left a short but graphic account of it. Ashworth took the orthodox side of every question; but Clark, the sub-tutor,¹ maintained the advanced position. Priestley is explicit in the statement that the extreme form of Christology among them was Arianism, the students having left the academy with a belief, more or less qualified, in the doctrine of Atone-

1. Afterwards a minister at Birmingham.

ment. Notwithstanding his personal views, Ashworth's students afterwards became Arian, especially in Lancashire, and the difficulty of finding a suitable successor to him was keenly felt by the liberal party. Samuel Palmer of Hackney, lamenting the dearth of students, alluded to the remarkable providence that Thomas Robins of West Bromwich had accepted the office of divinity tutor at Daventry academy.

It is difficult to do adequate justice to the intellectual labours of the group of tutors that were connected with Warrington academy. Aikin, Priestley, Taylor, Enfield, Clayton, Wakefield and others of equal calibre maintained an academic atmosphere, and created a distinct literature in a manner that was unrivalled, except at a university. As far as the theological results were concerned, that blaze was soon out. The institution had a theological foundation, with special advantages to divinity students, and had been established with the express object of propagating the interests and the tenets of the Rational Dissenters. Priestley has left it on record, that at Warrington they were all Arians, the only subject upon which there was a difference of opinion being that of Atonement, regarding which Aikin had some obscure notions. Taylor's view of this subject was conservative, and partly accounted for the uncomfortable circumstances of his tutorship. In 1762, five years after the establishment of the academy, Orton said that the Liverpool Liturgy had injured the Warrington academy, from which institution, through the enthusiasm of Seddon the Rector, it had received support. He added that London subscribers had been withdrawn, and remarked that if Taylor had drawn up the liturgy it would have been much more evangelical.

The theological development from a definite Arianism to Socinianism was an easy process, on such a foundation. It cannot be said with certainty that Socinianism was taught at Warrington, or that anything distinctly dogmatic was taught, but many of the students took up that position later, as John Seddon of Cross Street, Manchester, had done years before. The ambition of the age was scientific, not theological, and the group of tutors in Warrington academy gave their students liberty almost amounting to latitude. Priestley had not reached the zenith of his scientific discoveries. Enfield, the author of the first history of Liverpool, was for a time the Rector of the academy.¹ Aikin, the divinity professor, and his talented family, among whom was Mrs. Barbauld, were popular with the students. Forster, the celebrated naturalist and circumnavigator, Taylor, the theologian and lexicographer, and Walker, who could write with equal ability upon Conic sections or Natural philosophy, were among those who made Warrington academy distinguished.

As a factor in the Arian Movement, Warrington was the most powerful of all the academic agencies that existed. Lancashire, which is pre-eminent to-day for its Unitarianism, reached that position partly through the students of Daventry academy, but mainly through those of Warrington. As a Divinity school it may be reckoned a failure, as it went too far for its supporters, and not far enough for the ideals of Rational Dissent.²

1. Enfield afterwards became a "Humanitarian." *Vide* vol iii of his *Sermons*, 1798.

2. The establishment of Manchester Academy, which was the original of the present Manchester College, Oxford, was undertaken partly to recover the prestige which the Protestant Dissenters had lost in some quarters, through the Warrington Academy. Two of the promoters were Thomas Barnes, D.D., and Ralph Harrison, both of them Warrington students. Barnes was Arian, but Harrison became Unitarian. Their ideals regarding the academy may be seen from the sermons which they preached at the opening of it.

Turning to the metropolis, the academies which assisted the Arian Movement were those of Hoxton and Hackney. Prior to their establishment, a number of students were taught by John Ker, M.D., of Highgate, who had a high standard of education, and several of his students became well-known in the Dissenting ministry.¹

Hoxton was the continuation of a seminary founded by the Rev. Isaac Chauncy, M.A., L.C.P., who died in 1712. He was succeeded by Thomas Ridgley, D.D., who died in 1734, his colleague being John Eames, F.R.S., who died ten years later. Reference will be made later to Ridgley's theology, and the work of Eames was in intellectual subjects, his knowledge procuring for him the friendship of Sir Isaac Newton. Owing to diffidence, he only attempted to preach once, but his work as a tutor was highly esteemed. After the death of Ridgley, Eames was assisted by Joseph Densham, and upon the death of Eames, the office of principal tutor was filled by David Jennings, D.D., a brother of Jennings of Kibworth.

Jennings conducted the academy from 1744 to 1762, for thirteen years of which period his assistant was Morton Savage, D.D. In 1762, the seminary was removed to Hoxton, to the house where the late Dr. Daniel Williams had lived, from which time it was called the Hoxton academy. It received support from the Coward Trustees, and it is significant that although the history and intentions of the founders of Hoxton and Daventry were somewhat conservative, these two institutions were the means of supplying a considerable number of Arian preachers to the Dissenting ministry. Two of the most distinguished tutors of Hoxton were Andrew Kippis,

1. The Rev. Alex. Gordon says that Ker taught first as a subordinate Tutor, and later in an Academy of his own.

D.D., F.R.S. (1763-84), and Abraham Rees, D.D. (1762-85). In 1785, Hoxton academy was closed, and some of the students were removed to Daventry, where, under Thomas Belsham, theology was passing into a new stage. The Daventry academy was in an unsettled state, and Warrington academy was about to be closed, and a new institution was established in London, in 1786, called Hackney New College. Its chief object was to provide a secular education, but it emphasised the fact that subscription to theological formularies would be condemned.¹

It was in the West of England, that the Arian Movement received its earliest and strongest impetus.² The names of Revs. Matthew Warren, Stephen James, Robert Darch and Henry Grove were representative of Taunton academy, but it was under Thomas Amory, D.D., that most of its students became Arian; and upon his removal to Old Jewry, London, in 1759, the academy appears to have been dissolved.

The influence of the Exeter academy has already been mentioned. Its first tutor was the Rev. John Hallett, sen., and for the closing portion of its first period his son carried on the work. It ceased to exist for nearly forty years, and was revived in 1760, in a house which had been given by William Mackworth Praed. Micaijah Towgood was invited as tutor, and the library belonging to the late

1. Another London academy which is known as the Homerton academy, was an attempt to continue the orthodox tradition. The London Independents began with lectures at Plasterers' Hall, and upon the institution of "The King's Head Society" in 1730, two new tutors were added. In 1735, Plasterers' Hall was fitted up. In 1754, the institution was transferred to Mile End, where another tutor was added, and in 1770 it removed to Homerton. The most prominent of its tutors were Dr. Abraham Taylor, Dr. Zeph. Marryat, Dr. John Conder and Dr. Thos. Gibbons.

2. Isaac Gilling's sermon (1708) indicates the enlightened views of the ministers.

academy at Taunton was removed to Exeter. Towgood, who later had several advanced men with him as tutors, was an Arian of a moderate type.

Another academy which contributed greatly to the Movement, especially in the West of England, was that of Bridgwater, Somerset. The progressive stage began with the tutorship of Rev. John Moore, jun., who in 1717 succeeded his father in the academy, continuing until his death in 1747. He was a man of considerable learning, being particularly proficient in science.

The last academy that need be mentioned is the Presbyterian academy of South Wales. Originating at the close of the seventeenth century, it appeared in different towns throughout its long history, finally returning to Camarthen in 1795, where it still remains. The progressive views appear upon the appointment of the Rev. Thomas Perrot, who was a man of extensive learning, and who educated a large number of the clergy and ministers of South Wales. In February, 1755, the London Congregational Fund Board discontinued their supply of students, alleging Arianism against the tutor Samuel Thomas, and eventually this body established a new academy at Abergavenny.

The influence of this South Wales academy may be estimated from the fact that during the time the students were lodged at Rhydgyors, the Presbyterian Board had students there, twenty-three of whom settled in England, twelve or thirteen becoming anti-Trinitarian.

Only one other thing need be referred to, and that relates to the continuity of the Nonconformist tradition. The Protestant Dissenters do not believe in Apostolical succession, but a good case could be made out for such a theory, if apostolicity consists in the transference of

convictions and principles from one generation to another, by a recognised and educated ministry. It is granted, that the doctrine taught at these seminaries varied, and beginning with the Calvinism of the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, and its Confession of Faith, it ended in Socinianism. The ideas of toleration, religious liberty, freedom of inquiry, freedom of utterance both in press and pulpit, which after all are the permanent deposit in the Nonconformist tradition, were carefully guarded by all the academies, as a sacred trust.

It would be a simple matter to relate almost every academy in England to the two or three original ones, and the following links of connection occur. Frankland's work was carried on in the North of England, in two directions; in the one, by Jollie of Attercliffe, and in the other, by Chorlton of Manchester. Jollie's work was carried on by Wadsworth at Attercliffe, and Chorlton's work was continued by Dixon at Whitehaven, and afterwards at Bolton, Lancashire. The Kendal academy originated with Caleb Rotheram senr., who to some extent may be said to have carried on the work of his old tutor Dr. Dixon. These academies supplied the northern congregations for the first half of the eighteenth century.

Hill's academy at Findern, Derbyshire, was carried on by Latham, who was a student from the neighbouring town of Shrewsbury. Jennings originated the academy at Kibworth, and afterwards at Hinckley, both in Leicestershire. Doddridge, a student of Jennings, maintained the tradition at Market Harborough, Leicestershire, and at Northampton. Ashworth, a student of Doddridge's, continued the type of teaching at Daventry. Robins, a student of Ashworth's, succeeded his old tutor at Daventry, while Priestley, another student of Daventry, after

several pastorates, developed the Daventry tradition at Warrington academy. Barnes, a Warrington student, was one of the founders of Manchester academy.

In the West of England, the same apostolical links may be found. The elder Hallett carried on an academy at Exeter, which was continued by his son.¹ At Taunton, Matthew Warren established an academy, which was continued by two of his old students, Messrs. James and Grove. Amory, a student of Henry Grove, did important work in the continuance of this academy. The students of Porter of Alcester, were transferred to Alexander of Stratford-on-Avon. The Moores of Bridgwater are similar instances of the way in which the Nonconformist principles were perpetuated.

What these academies did for the intellectual development of England can never be over-estimated. What they did for progressive thought in England was really to keep it back half a century at least, in the majority of Nonconformist pulpits. The movement from the Calvinism of the first quarter of the century to the Unitarianism of the last, was so swift and so disastrous upon traditional orthodoxy and practical religion that it is not surprising if the academies were criticised, and their real worth forgotten.

1. The son had a secret correspondence with Whiston. *Monthly Repository*, vol. ii, p. 2.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LIBERAL THEOLOGIANS.

ONE result of the Salters' Hall Synod was to divide the Protestant Dissenters into several parties. The words "Presbyterian" and "Independent" had lost their original meanings, and had become obsolete through the use of the comprehensive phrase, "The Protestant Dissenting Interest." In the Salters' Hall controversy the Presbyterian party were most prominent on the advanced side, while the Independent party were on the opposite side; but it was not a denominational dispute, and men of each party were found on either side.

With the formation of the "London Congregational Board" in 1728, the old distinction reappeared. As the Calvinistic revival took place among the Independents, the distinction deepened; while on the other hand, Presbyterian views relaxed.

Among the many shades of theological thought at this time, were the views of men whose orthodoxy on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity was unquestioned, but who had a reservation of opinion upon the speculative doctrine of the Trinity. The arguments of Clarke and others could not be ignored, but here and there they met with criticism of a qualified and reasonable character. An illustration of this may be seen in the work of Rev. John Alexander, who for some time had an academy at Stratford-on-Avon, but was afterwards in Dublin. He adopted the view of Clarke, that the Fathers should only

be appealed to as competent witnesses, but he thinks that Clarke has drawn consequences from primitive writers without any proof that they would be owned by them, or as much as known to them. His work is an examination of the opinions of Irenaeus, whom he proves to have been a believer in the Trinity.¹

Another instance of an attempt to restate the doctrine, is in a sermon² by Thomas Scott, of Norwich. It is preached from the words, "My Lord and my God!" His interpretation of the passage is unconvincing to the modern mind, but the application is more effective. He cannot see how the Socinian interpretation, which relates the text to God the Father, is feasible, as it is plainly addressed to Jesus Christ.

A further illustration of what was taking place in many of the meeting-houses, may be found in the attitude of Samuel Fancourt of Salisbury. At the time of the Salters' Hall controversy, his sympathy was with the conservative party,³ but like many others, he came to feel the difficulty of the doctrine of divine Reprobation.⁴

A striking attempt to indicate the new Calvinistic position was made by Thomas Ridgley, D.D. (1667?—1734), who published in 1731 several lectures on the Westminster Assembly's Larger Catechism.⁵ He proved that many, if not all of the doctrines of Calvinism had their origin in Scripture. This book unconsciously illus-

1. *The Primitive Doctrine of Christ's Divinity*, 1727 (Memorial Hall Library).

2. Published in 1727 (a copy in Dr. Williams' Library).

3. *Vide his Essay concerning Certainty and Infallibility*, 1720.

4. *The Greatness of the Divine Love*, 1727.

5. Ridgley had made a contribution at the time of the Salters' Hall Synod, by his pamphlet on *The Unreasonableness of the Charge of Imposition exhibited against several Dissenting Ministers in and about London, Considered*, 1720. This was in addition to the *Essay* on p. 61.

trates what is still a difficulty in Protestantism, and that is the extent to which Scripture must be followed regarding secondary things. His argument for the traditional doctrine of the Trinity is an able one, and his point is that the traditional doctrine is not exposed to greater difficulties than the newer theories upon this subject. Occasionally, the treatment of the data is open to criticism, but the lectures are a good example of liberal theology and orthodoxy at a time when such a combination was rare.¹

Ridgley's book was followed by one from Simon Browne (1680—1732).² He had been minister at Old Jewry, London, and at the time of the Salters' Hall Synod adhered to the Nonsubscribers, which explains the lively discussion between him and Thomas Bradbury, the champion of the Subscribers. Browne's work was the means of bringing forward the internal problems of Christian theology, which had been affected by the new view of the Person of Christ. In 1721, Joseph Pyke had raised the question whether our Lord should be worshipped as Mediator,³ and Browne continued the subject, concluding that worship is due to Christ not because He is God, but as Mediator. After an examination of the theory of the Satisfaction of Christ for sin, he upholds the expiatory character of Christ's work, although not finding in the Scripture that the guilt of sin is infinite, or that amends must be made by an infinite person. After an exhaustive review of the whole matter, Browne appeals to charity, in view of the difficulties, believing that calm and charitable debate can never hurt the truth.

1. *A Body of Divinity, etc.*

2. *A Sober and Charitable Disquisition, Concerning, etc., 1732.*

3. *An Impartial View of the Principal Difficulties that affect the Trinitarian, or clog the Arian Scheme.*

The most important name among the liberal school of theologians in the eighteenth century, was that of Isaac Watts, D.D. (1674—1748). After an education at Stoke Newington academy, he became assistant to Isaac Chauncy at Mark Lane, and in 1702 succeeded to the pastorate of this influential congregation. In 1713, he received the help of Samuel Price as colleague, and from that year (in addition to his ministerial work) he acted as chaplain to Sir Thomas and Lady Abney.

The name of Watts occurs in a list of "Non-attendants or Neutrals" at Salters' Hall, but in 1722 he issued a work on the Trinity. In it he remarked that he was willing to leave the Christian view to the judgment of a Turk, or an Indian. This phrase was immediately taken up by Martin Tomkins, who on account of Arian views had resigned his pulpit at Stoke Newington, several years before. Hubert Stogdon, whose name is associated with the Exeter controversy, while admitting that Watts would not affirm that a belief in the Trinity was necessary to salvation, nevertheless charged Watts with conveying his charity with a secret hand. Watts admitted the imputation, believing it to be a Christian principle, and in a dignified way rebuking those "who seem to take a pleasure in debasing the nature or character of our blessed Lord."

In a preface to the sermon by Scott of Norwich, already referred to, Watts had stated that of late years the subject had been occupying his attention. He admitted that the *modus* of the Trinity had never been fully explained, although he thought there must be a true explanation of it; and he was prepared to give encouragement to every reverent and sincere effort for the attainment of further light. In the meantime, our final salvation did not

depend on our exact and skilful knowledge of the true *modus*, but it is abundant for salvation if we believe the various offices which are assigned to the Father, Son and Spirit, in the dispensation of the Gospel; and that each of them has a divine all-sufficiency to sustain the offices, and to receive the honours due to them. The liberal attitude of Watts, together with his personality, made him acceptable wherever he went. It was impossible for him to escape criticism, either from the one party or the other. His view was opposed by Abraham Taylor, an Independent minister of Deptford. Taylor received a vigorous rejoinder from an anonymous supporter of Watts, who told him that he was only gnawing at a file, if he attempted to injure Watts.

Watts took up the matter again in a discussion which he had with Martin Tomkins, on the subject of doxologies. Tomkins had become attached to the meeting-house at Mare Street, Hackney, where John Barker (1682—1762) was at that time minister. He published a pamphlet objecting to the doxologies used by Barker, and freely criticising those sung from Watts's "Psalms and Hymns."

A few years afterwards, Watts published two pamphlets, which, notwithstanding the statement of Lardner,¹ may be taken as his final view. In the first, he examines in a masterly way what essential elements must be in a doctrine that is considered necessary for salvation. The last of six postulates laid down, is that it must be a doctrine that is obvious in Scripture, and that is evidently contained there. Watts is of opinion that "the Sacred Three" are all represented in several places, as having true and proper deity, yet on account of the contention which the

1. The theological position of Watts may be seen in Samuel Palmer's pamphlet, *Dr. Watts no Socinian*.

word "person" has raised in the Churches he argues against the use of it. The foundation truth as he conceives it is, that if the Son of God and the Holy Spirit have true Godhead, as well as the Father, then since there is but one true eternal God, it follows that one and the same true Godhead which is in the Father is the very Godhead that belongs to the Son and the Holy Ghost.

It was in the second pamphlet that Watts elaborated his theory of the "assumption" of Christ, by God. In order to express the intimacy and universality of the relation of Christ to humanity, he worked upon the axiom that the Incarnation existed eternally, either in the decree of God, or in reality, in the sense, *viz.*, that God was united with a human soul, even before the creation of the world. Christ therefore as God-man eternally in the decree, or "by way of anticipation," was the pattern or archetype; and the different perfections which are embodied in this humanity of Christ as in the archetype, are contained in a separate and scattered state in the rest of creation. It was in virtue of his "assumption" that the God-man was made the instrument of Creation, and given virtually the glory of Creation, although he did not actually become Man until four thousand years after the beginning of the world: for He was destined to become incarnate in Time, even before all others, and is in fact the first-born of all Creation; but his Incarnation was suspended "for glorious ends."

Upon this theory Watts had therefore to give the archetype a real existence before the origin of the world, and he does so by conceiving Christ as a glorious creature, who was "assumed" by God as an organ prior to the world, and through it (*sic*) all things were created. This glorious soul is the mirror and image of God, taking up

into itself as much of the divine as any created being could grasp. In Mary, this soul "assumed" in addition, human flesh.

The Christology of Watts was neither unique nor original, although he gave it more lustre than any who had previously adopted it. He impressed this view upon English religious thought, and it became the orthodox one, although not agreeing with the orthodox creeds. It was probably first advocated by Hugo de St. Victor, and found many adherents in England from the close of the seventeenth century until the middle of the eighteenth.

One of the most distinguished leaders of religious thought in England in the eighteenth century was Philip Doddridge, D.D. (1702-51). He was fortunately sent to the academy of John Jennings of Kibworth, who was a man of liberal principles,¹ and he also owed much to the kindness of Samuel Clark, D.D., of St. Albans, whose counsel was given in many wise letters. It was he who recommended young Doddridge to make a close study of the Scriptures, and to apply them effectively to the consciences of men. His remarks about books were specially helpful. He told Doddridge that he ought to have studied Locke's "Essay" before he started "Pneumatics." While appreciating Samuel Clarke's great work on theology, Clark of St. Albans advised Doddridge to pay attention to the subjects of the authority and authenticity of Scripture, as he perceived that the prevalence of Deism had increased the necessity for them. Upon the publication of the first volume of Lardner's "Credibility," he told Doddridge that it was well worth his reading.

With a fixed and moderate attitude to the great

1. *Vide Two Discourses*, the first of *Preaching Christ*; the second of *Particular and Experimental Preaching*, 1723.

theological question of the age Doddridge left the academy, and like Newton of an earlier generation, and Watts his contemporary, he came to be universally admired. He was acceptable to the two parties that existed among the Dissenters. His strong intellect, attractive personality and gracious manner were regulated by the reasonable and practical view which he took of all theological questions. He saw on the one hand, the inability to maintain the traditional position of English Calvinism without some modification. On the other hand, he recognised the need of conserving the essentials of that system and of adhering to them. Through his influence, from about the year 1724, we find the word "reasonable" substituted for "rational," and the word "evangelical" taking the place of "Calvinistical." Doddridge's success may be explained, partly by his position. Many things he unhesitatingly accepted as a matter of belief, upon which as a matter of theology he had two, or even three opinions. To Doddridge, it was the thing which counted, and the method of expressing it was secondary. At the same time, he perceived the different modes of theological teaching which different opinions were bound to create, and he was one of the first to take up an attitude of comparative indifference to traditional theology.

It is not, however, surprising that Doddridge was regarded by many as "a trimmer," but the description is altogether inadequate. Kippis observes that while Doddridge's academy was at Kibworth, he read his early sermons to his students, and they had less Calvinistic dress about them than those utterances after the academy was settled at Northampton. This supports the theory, that Doddridge endeavoured to give fresh and more

scriptural meanings to the phrases of Calvinistic theology.

Doddridge's attitude to the great controversy of his time was that of a cautious liberalism. Writing as a student, shortly after Salters' Hall Synod, he told his friend Clark of St. Albans that he had decided to be a silent well-wisher to the interests of liberty and peace. Although subsequent events compelled him to take a more definite position than he had intended, yet the sentiment of the passage illustrates Doddridge's desire to avoid controversial Christianity, and to make his ministry a practical one.

In no more definite way was this accomplished than in "the Family Expositor," a book that was valued by Conformist and Nonconformist alike. From the many compliments which Doddridge received, including those of Warburton and John Jones, his writings on practical Christianity may be considered as among the best in England in the eighteenth century.

Doddridge's theology was greatly influenced by that of Isaac Watts, but he improved upon the latter's scheme, by making it more scriptural, and less metaphysical. He accepted the view of Christ's pre-existence, and believed that it was by the name of "Jehovah" that Christ was known in the Old Testament, and in whom and through whom God appeared to men. Instead of accepting Watts's theory of the Incarnation as an "assumption," Doddridge preferred to call it a "union" by God to the derived nature of Christ, which by virtue of such indwelling union Christ may properly be called God, and be entitled to "regards, more than to any created nature, or mere creature."

In his doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Doddridge advanced beyond the position of Watts, who recognised that the

word “Spirit” was used in the New Testament in both personal and impersonal senses; but Doddridge thinks that the use of the word makes it inconceivable that it could be used of a mere creature.

Doddridge’s definition of the Trinity is in careful and untheological language:—

“The Scripture represents the divine Being as appearing in, and manifesting Himself by the distinct Persons of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, each of which has his peculiar province in accomplishing the work of our redemption and salvation; and to each of which we owe unlimited veneration, love and obedience.”¹

This definition, on its own grounds, is unassailable. It avoids any metaphysical statement regarding the pre-existent nature of Christ, and by affirming a “peculiar province” to each of the three Persons it satisfies the Christian conscience, retaining the evangelical doctrine, without entering into the abstruse questions of the relation of each of these three Persons to the other, in his “peculiar province.”

Doddridge’s theological position was distinct from that of the Arian party, but the moderation that characterised his students helped to make the transition easier. At the same time, some of his students stemmed the Movement, and carried the meeting-house through the stressful period. Doddridge himself pursued “a moderately Calvinistical way” in his academy until the close of his life, and the sense of loss which the liberal party felt at Doddridge’s declining health found sincere expression in the poignant letter of John Barker, a life-long friend.

For nearly twenty years before Doddridge’s death,

1. Doddridge’s *Lectures*, 3rd edition, edited by Andrew Kippis, D.D.

Nonconformity had been in a languishing condition. As the ejected ministers passed away, the subject of ministerial supply became an anxious one. The Salters' Hall decision did not end the matter, but carried the conflict into the Meeting-houses. The Dissenting ministry about 1729, was appealing to a social class inferior to that of their predecessors, but even the small income necessary for their support was difficult to obtain.¹

The whole subject gave rise to an animated discussion, in which Strickland Gough took part. He had been educated for the Dissenting ministry at Taunton academy, but finding that he could conform on the principles of Samuel Clarke, had done so, becoming a vicar in Lincolnshire. In a spirited criticism of the Dissenters, he animadverted upon their methods, and although he is somewhat severe, many of his remarks are not inappropriate to-day.²

Doddridge replied to Gough in a pamphlet, which although one of his earliest pieces of writing, deserves the high praise bestowed upon it by contemporary admirers.³ The opinions in it, prove that Doddridge perceived from the beginning of his ministry the change through which Christianity had passed.⁴

1. *A Modest Plea for the Maintenance, etc.* David Rees, 1729.

2. *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Decay, etc.* Published anonymously in 1730.

3. *Free Thoughts on the most probable means of reviving the Dissenting Interest,* 1730.

4. Another writer advocated an official ministry to conserve the vital elements in the traditional Faith. *Vide Some Observations upon the Present State, etc.*, 1731. Dr. Abraham Taylor also wrote *Spiritual Declensions and the Danger, etc.*, 1731; and *A Humble and Impartial Inquiry*, 1732. A writer in the Established Church challenged Gough's remarks about Subscription, and the XXXIX Articles, in *An Apology for the Church of England*, 1732. A number of Dissenting ministers conformed about this time, but it was mainly on account of the readiness of the Church of England to accept them, on a Clarkean interpretation of their formularies.

That which Doddridge saw on the horizon almost before he began his work, literally came to pass as he closed it. A period of pessimism for Protestant Dissent arrived. The old theology was discarded, and the old landmarks were lifted up and thrown away. The hopes of the Protestant Dissenters which had been so high at the beginning of the century, were low and wavering as the first half closed.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARIAN PERIOD.

CLEARLY distinct from the Deistic controversy, the Arian Movement cannot be altogether dissociated from it.¹ The re-constitution of everything intellectual and social, which had been brought about by the method of Locke, the spirit of Newton, and the researches of a host of thinkers in every department, had revolutionised England in less than half a century. Hitherto, Protestantism had not ventured beyond the domain bounded by the Scriptures, and the vast and unknown tracts of intellectual life that lay beyond were untraversed. With a keenness for intellectual speculation which was new in this country, and nearly unique, groups of thinkers were taking down the ancient edifices of religion and philosophy, and erecting new fabrics of thought in their place.

With the spread of Deism, and the immorality and indifference of the middle and upper classes, the foundations of society were moved as by an earthquake. The theologians, in the interests of Revealed religion, were

1. English Arianism and Deism in their practical results were, however, generally identified. Dr. Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London for twenty-eight years, published a Pastoral Letter in 1728, "occasioned by some late Writings in favour of Infidelity." It was intended for the Deists, but was applicable to the Clarkeans, and when the Second Pastoral Letter was issued in 1730, John Jackson replied with, *A Plea for Humane Reason*. Gibson then published *A Plea for Divine Revelation*, to which Jackson replied with *A Defense of the Plea for Human Reason*. Gibson's third Pastoral Letter was issued in 1739, to which Jackson sent *A Letter to the Right Reverend, etc.*, under the signature of Philalethes.

compelled to restrict their speculations, and the best explanation of the acceptability of the Arian and Clarkean views of the Trinity is that both these positions were conservative.

The state of Protestant Dissent about the year 1730, may be gathered from "the Lime Street Lectures." Abraham Taylor's lecture is particularly illuminating, and from it we learn that the heterodox party had come to look upon the doctrine of the Trinity as, "a mere speculative felicity of hitting the divine nature right, in some mode of thinking." Referring to the "pretence borrowed from the Socinians and the Jesuits" that it is sufficient for men to assent to the words of Scripture, Taylor remarks that it might be so, if there were no knaves in the world and no wolves in sheep's clothing in the Church. In former days, such as those of Chillingworth, men were able to assert the absolute sufficiency of Scripture, and to put creeds in a relatively subordinate position, because they considered that the "excellent summaries of the Christian Faith" were almost synonymous with the Word of God itself. Taylor's explanation for the decay in practical religion was, "the contempt which has for many years been cast on the Holy Spirit and his operations."¹

The critical period in Protestant Dissent had arrived. An analysis of the pastorates at the Presbyterian and Independent meeting-houses in England, proves that between the years 1730 and 1750, very few of them were untouched by Arianism. It was through this almost invisible channel that the Calvinistic theology was dispersed, and a current of new ideas brought to the people of England.

1. *The Lime Street Lectures.*

Gradually, the centre of controversy had changed. Each party had begun to realise the metaphysical contents of the traditional doctrines, and the fact that they were not absolutely scriptural in form gave rise to an indifferentism, which was the outcome of the Protestant principle in the eighteenth century. When the real Arian period began, it was taken for granted that the questions of the Trinity and of the deity of Jesus were comprehensible only on an Arian basis.

The Arian Movement reached its climax through a period of negative criticism. The Calvinism that was prevalent at the close of the seventeenth century quietly disappeared before a theology that approximated to Arminianism, but which preferred the title of moderate Calvinism. George Benson, in his first pastorate at Abingdon, had avowed himself an early disciple of this kind, and had paid the penalty by accepting dismissal.

One by one, the great doctrines of the Christian religion came to be scrutinised. The traditional views were drastically treated, and regard was paid, not to their antiquity, but to the truth of them. The whole ground of Protestant dogmatics was contested in 1736, when a catechism was published by the Rev. James Strong of Ilminster.¹ Apparently, one of the reasons for Strong's action was the excommunication of Mr. Joseph Rawson, a member of the Castlegate meeting-house, Nottingham. John Taylor of Norwich had taken up the case, and Rev. James Sloss of Nottingham had defended the orthodox party. In the same year, Samuel Bourn (*secundus*) of

1. A long and spirited reply was given by the Rev. David Millar, M.A., the Dissenting minister of Hammersmith, in, *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism Rescu'd from the late Reviser and Vindicator*, 1738.

Birmingham continued the discussion, by criticising a vital question in the Westminster Assembly's Catechism.¹

The resignation of Philip Gibbs, an assistant minister with John Barker, at the somewhat rural charge of Hackney took place in 1737.² The letter which he sent to the congregation rightly stated his views, one of which was that he was not prepared to teach the Catechism. He added that when he had taken up the work at Hackney, he had not made his "last understanding in religious matters."

These indications of departure from the traditional position were soon followed by pulpit utterances, which whether published or not, began to break down the theological bulwark of Calvinism. An illustration of the changing conditions is found in the "Two Letters" of George Benson, D.D. (1699—1762). One was on the subject of Prayer, which he believed was not instituted to inform God of anything. His conception of the relationship between the human and the divine was, that infinite unerring Wisdom, illimitable Power and superlative Goodness have unalterably fixed the terms of acceptance upon which we are heard and answered.

The other letter dealt with the subject of Predestination, and the Bible was examined with a thoroughness that showed the influence of Lardner upon the Arian scholars. His view of Inspiration was similar to that of Viscount

1. The first Samuel Bourn was nephew of an ejected minister. The younger Bourn read Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine*, and Waterland's *Defences*. He recorded his conclusion that nothing contributed more to his acceptance of "The Scripture Doctrine" than the insufficient defences which Clarke's opponents made. Bourn's *Lectures to Children*, published in 1738, is an attempt to discard the old theology (a copy in the New College Library, Edinburgh).

2. In 1738 the Rev. David Millar, in his criticism of Gibbs' letter, wrote: "Nor was I ever in Hackney but once, and once that I walked through it." Hammersmith and Hackney were far apart in those days!

Barrington, and was an indication that the dogma of verbal inspiration was no longer accepted.

Benson's aggressive attitude towards Calvinism appears, in his revival of the story of Calvin and Servetus; and an illustration of the change which had come to Protestant theologians is the incidental definition which he gives of Faith, describing it as "the root or principle of a holy life, working by love, and producing the excellent fruit of righteousness, or of holiness."

By his moderate temper and scholarship, Benson may be reckoned as one of the forces that assisted in dissolving the Calvinistic opinions of Protestant Dissent.¹

One of the most distinguished of the Arian party in England was John Taylor, D.D. (1694—1761). A native of Lancashire, he received his education at Whitehaven academy, under Dr. Thomas Dixon, and at the age of twenty-one began his career as minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Kirkstead, Lincolnshire. The eighteen years in that obscure pastorate prepared him for the larger sphere into which he gradually emerged. During that period he became dissatisfied with the commentary of Matthew Henry, which had for years been popular, considering that it was "too large and tedious for practical purposes," and having discovered that "Mr. Henry did not sweat much for the exact sense of the text, in some parts of the work."

This remark, quoted in a letter to a friend when Taylor was unknown, and too poor to buy books, and reluctant to continue borrowing them, indicates the characteristic of Taylor's work throughout his life. His analytic mind began to examine Scriptural ideas, and he discovered

1. An edition of Benson's *Life of Christ* was published posthumously in 1764, by Dr. Thomas Amory, whose sketch of Benson contains much information.

that many points of theological doctrine which were universally accepted, were not to be found in Scripture. His knowledge of Hebrew gave great value to his Old Testament work, and it was in the Old Testament subjects of Sin and Atonement that excellent service was rendered by him.

In 1733, he settled in Norwich. He had adopted Clarke's view of the Trinity, and he persuaded a portion of the congregation to meet for the study of Clarke's book. It is illustrative of Taylor's reverential treatment of the themes of Christianity, that he and the congregation at Norwich met twice for prayer upon the matter.

Taylor's reputation was achieved chiefly through his publications, the first of which was in 1737, when he described the action of the Castlegate meeting-house, Nottingham, as Protestant Popery, because they would not accept from one of their members a scriptural declaration regarding the deity of Christ.

In the year 1740, he published a work on the subject of Original Sin, which was not only one of the standard books of English Arianism, but estimated by its reputation, one of the masterpieces of eighteenth century theology. It was a direct attack upon this chief doctrine of the Puritan theology, the examination being based upon the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly. Although it did not satisfy later theologians, on account of its literal treatment of several passages (especially that of the first chapter of Genesis), it dealt equitably with what the earlier theologians would have called "the whole counsel of God," and it gave a perspective to Biblical history that unfortunately had not been hitherto observed.

Taylor's view met with much acceptance. In England it had the effect of destroying the Puritan theology on

Original Sin, among Conformists and Nonconformists, and the work of Thomas Balguy, B.D. (1716-95), an Archdeacon of Winchester, was clearly affected by it. Nearly twenty years after its publication, John Wesley wrote Taylor that he met with it everywhere. In Scotland it found many adherents, especially in the Presbytery of Ayr, which also adopted Taylor's scriptural catechism in preference to the Shorter Catechism; and Jonathan Edwards declared that no one book had done so much towards rooting out orthodox theology in the Western parts of New England, than Taylor's book on Original Sin.

The chief replies to the work came from Isaac Watts, David Jennings and John Wesley. Taylor ignored Wesley, to his annoyance, but in a work published six years afterwards, he replied to Watts and Jennings. He thought that Watts had done him wrong in imagining that he excluded Atonement from the scheme of Redemption, and he drew attention to a passage in the book where he acknowledges Christ's Atonement, "in the highest and fullest, in the most proper, perfect and extensive sense." Taylor repeated his argument that no sin is punished by God but personal sin, and that punishing the innocent, is acting directly against the eternal and immutable nature of things.

Taylor explained his methods of scripture interpretation, in an article prefixed to a work which he published in 1745. It was called a "Key to the Apostolic writings," but Doddridge described it as a key broken in the lock. It treated the writings as letters that had originated according to the circumstances or characteristics of those to whom they were addressed, and was similar in method to the work of Locke.

Three years after the "Essay" of Arthur Ashley Sykes, Taylor published a work on "Atonement," which reflects the difficulty of combining an Arian Christology with the traditional theology. While believing that Christ's death was all-sufficient, he would not admit that the death of Christ was to satisfy vindictive justice, or that the suffering of Christ was a vicarious punishment. It was Christ's obedience ("the crowning act of His holiness") which obtained the reward from God of forgiveness through His name, and a new dispensation of Grace. The theory of Taylor suggests an ethical contract, which scarcely does justice to the data of Scripture, and gives to "obedience" an efficacy for which there is no authority or analogy in human institution. Even if there were, a man's obedience would produce no more than a reward for himself; whereas the obedience of Christ (according to Taylor) was to make Him a Saviour of mankind, for all time.

Taylor's tutorship at Warrington academy (1757-61), was neither happy nor successful. His views were not acceptable to many of the students, and matters were not improved by his criticism of the philosophy of Hutcheson, which formed the basis of the last type of Arian theology. Taylor's lectures on philosophy were on the model of Wollaston's book, published as far back as 1724, and Taylor, apparently afraid of what was taking place in current theology returned to Wollaston, because that writer (in the words of Clarke of Salisbury) "knew where to stop."

About the time of Taylor's death, a discussion arose among the "Rational Dissenters" on the subject of a liturgy. Taylor, whose views are very reasonable, did not agree with the proposals, and took part in a short but

interesting discussion that arose. He prepared for the press, but did not live to see published, a tract on the subject, and after a brief experiment, the project was abandoned.

The best tribute that can be paid to Taylor is that which was given by his contemporaries. They were many and varied, including those of John Jones and Edward Harwood, the latter of whom delineated his friend in a graphic way.¹ The treatment which he received from the more advanced section of his party seems to have perturbed him, but his work remains, and will remain as a sincere attempt to eliminate from English Christianity any accretions from traditional theology that appeared to him to be unscriptural.

Foremost among the scholars of the Arian Movement must be placed the name of Nathaniel Lardner, D.D. (1684—1768). After a preliminary education under Joshua Oldfield, D.D., he went to Holland, and studied at Utrecht and Leyden. His first sermon was in 1709, when he preached for Martin Tomkins of Stoke Newington, a fellow-student of Lardner's in Holland. From about the years 1713—21, he was chaplain to Lady Treby. He was one of the authors of "The Occasional Papers," and took the side of the Nonsubscribers. He acted as assistant to his father at Hoxton meeting-house, from 1721 to 1729, and during that time was a member of a theological club held at Chew's Coffee House, as well as of a meeting held every Thursday for the preparation of a concordance to Biblical subjects. It was in connection with this meeting, that he gave the lectures, out of which originated his great work on "The Credibility of Gospel History." When the

1. There is a copy of a funeral sermon by Harwood, in the Manchester Free Reference Library.

first two volumes came out they were greatly praised by scholars of every party, and were the means of introducing Lardner to Viscount Barrington, who entered into a correspondence with him. One of Lardner's letters, to which reference will be made later, made a deep impression when published many years after it had been written.

The work of Lardner, Benson and Taylor may be described as a positive stage in the history of the Arian Movement in England. To what degree it approximated to primitive Arianism, is a difficult question. Its basis was a Clarkean view of the Trinity, which, accurately stated, differed considerably from Arianism, although in its practical result was scarcely distinguishable. One feature of this period was the entire absence of any particular theory of the Trinity. Cautious theologians like Watts and Doddridge were avoiding the controversial aspects, and at the same time suggesting modifications of the traditional doctrine. Indeed, the Athanasian formulæry still remained the only credal statement of the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity which was invulnerable to attack. Objections had been made to its metaphysical character, and to the presence in it of terms not in Scripture, but no party had provided a satisfactory substitute. It has been stated that Samuel Clarke, in the MS. corrections which he made in his copy of the Book of Common Prayer, succeeded in giving an Arian interpretation to the contents of that book. What he really did was to adapt it to an Arian standard, by excising and altering portions of it; and at a later period, taking Clarke for his model, Lindsey modified the same book to a Unitarian standard, and used it at Essex Street Chapel.

From about the middle of the eighteenth century, the Arian Movement passed into a new stage. The teaching

of Newton and others which inaugurated the modern era of science, was beginning to be absorbed. At the academies of the Protestant Dissenters, to a degree almost greater than at the universities, the tutors were instructing their pupils in Natural philosophy. At the University of Glasgow, Francis Hutcheson was changing the foundations of theology and ethics, and his views were passing into English life mainly through the students which the "Presbyterian Board" had sent up with Dr. Williams' bursaries.

James Foster, D.D. (1697—1753), was one of the small number of distinguished preachers related to the Arian Movement, and received a compliment from Pope, for excelling "ten metropolitans, in preaching well." Associating himself with Peirce of Exeter, Foster early became identified with the progressive party. In 1724, he went as colleague with Joseph Burroughs in the pastorate of Barbican (Baptist) meeting-house, London, where the well-known Dr. Gale had previously ministered. Foster soon came into prominence, partly by his preaching, which was of a high order, and partly by his reply to Tindal's deistic book.

In a volume of discourses published several years before his death, Foster's views show traces of Hutcheson's philosophy. The discourses are an attempt to repel the attacks of Deism by a scientific theology, and they suggest the method of Butler, whose famous work had been issued some years before the publication of Foster's volume.¹ Foster was one of the founders of the modern school of apologists, and initiated a new type of preaching, that was ethical, philosophic and scientific. He treats of

1. *Discourses on all Principal Branches of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1749. The year following its publication he received the degree of D.D. from Marischal College, Aberdeen.

the existence of a deity, as a First Cause, a phrase which is more familiar to the preachers of the twentieth century than it was to those of the eighteenth. His Christology while definite, was frankly Arian. He considered God to be the Supreme Cause, as He who stretched out the heavens alone. While he believed that the great design of Christ's ministrations was to promote Christian virtue, and to advance the interests of morality in the world, he was a firm adherent of "the Gospel scheme."

Another English disciple of Hutcheson, was Samuel Bourn (*tertius*) (1714-96). At Glasgow University, young Bourn was among the early students of Hutcheson, and upon completing his studies he settled at Rivington, Lancashire, at which meeting-house Lord Willoughby of Parham worshipped. It was, however, chiefly through his work at Norwich that Bourn gained his reputation, to which place he removed in 1754.

Bourn has the distinguished honour of having been able to influence the religious opinions of Robert Burns. The Scottish poet had been trained by William Burnes, in a catechism which with remarkable ability the father had compiled for his children, in preference to the Shorter Catechism.¹ It was a blend of John Taylor's catechism, with a philosophy that suggested the principles of Hutcheson. Burns grew up with the spirit of Moderatism in him, but when or how he came in contact with Bourn's works is not clear. In a correspondence which he had with Mrs. Dunlop, who had recommended Bourn's sermons to him, Burns told her that he once had the first volume, and was so pleased with it, that he could almost have repeated it verbatim.²

1. A limited number of copies of *A Manual of Religious Belief* was printed by M'Kee and Drennan, Kilmarnock, 1875.

2. *The Correspondence of Mrs. Dunlop and Robert Burns*.

This was a splendid tribute from one who possessing a deeply religious nature, had forsaken the traditional theology of his native land, and the traditional morality as well.

In the opening discourse of the two volumes of Bourn's sermons published in 1760, we find the following sentence:—

“As the supreme and ultimate end which the all-wise Creator and Ruler has in view . . . it can be no other, than the greatest good or happiness of the Universe in general.”¹

It is noteworthy, that in the year in which this Hutchesonian maxim was published by an English Arian minister, from whose pulpit it had previously been delivered, Bentham, who was destined to make this principle a permanent one in English thought, was only a boy of twelve.

It is in the second volume that Bourn re-states New Testament Christianity on an Arian basis, and this is one of the earliest, and one of the best pieces of constructive theology on the Person of Christ which the English Arians produced. The views represent the culmination of English Arian opinion. The volumes were subscribed for by a large number of influential persons, especially Cambridge scholars, and they indicate a definite stage, prior to the transition from Arianism to Socinianism.

1. Bourn issued other two volumes in 1772, with the title *Fifty Sermons on Various Subjects*. They are more general than the earlier volumes. The probability is, that Burns referred to the 1760 volumes.

CHAPTER XI.

REFORMATION AND CO-OPERATION.

Two of the most valuable portions of the work of the Arians in England were the attempts made to reconstitute English Christianity, and to bring about the union of all parties.

With regard to the first, it should be remembered that the doctrinal basis for Conformity and Nonconformity was the same. The Thirty-nine Articles were the foundations of the one, and the Westminster Confession, with the two Catechisms, the foundations of the other. It was the Prayer Book of the Established Church, deliberately compiled to disturb the Puritans, that stood in the way of union between the two parties. It was with the object of ridding Christianity of metaphysical phrases and subtleties of thought, that Clarke privately revised his own copy of the Prayer Book, but in conversation the subject was much discussed. A modification of the Prayer Book had been attempted by William Whiston,¹ and also by his brother Daniel, but Clarke's annotations were the first attempt at a scheme.²

Clarke introduced a revised doxology, "Glory be to God, by Jesus Christ, through the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost"; and he suggests the text Ephesians iii, 21, as an alternative. After making interesting minor alterations in the Morning Prayer, and slightly altering

1. In the last of his *Three Essays*, pub. 1713.

2. Clarke's copy of the Prayer Book which contains these notes, was presented to the British Museum in 1768 by his son.

the phraseology of the *Te Deum*, he entirely omits the Athanasian Creed, and in the same sweeping way deletes the Collect on Trinity Sunday. His ingenious suggestion regarding the Thirty-nine Articles is, that clergymen instead of subscribing to them should only be required to subscribe to the matters contained in the questions put by the Bishop, to every person about to be ordained priest.

It was through the careful and detailed examination of the whole subject by John Jones of Alconbury (as he has come to be called), that schemes for the reformation of the Established Church began to appear. His reputation survives chiefly in the MSS., which hidden away, like an unobserved monument, nevertheless testify to a life of active and intelligent interest in the problems which surrounded the Church of England, in the middle of the eighteenth century. Many of the notes are written upon the edges of newspapers and book advertisements, and imply that economy was a necessary virtue in the home of this poor but scholarly clergyman.¹

For some years, the relationships between the Established Church and the Protestant Dissenters had been growing more friendly.² Very few, if any, from the Establishment had joined the Dissenters, but a number of Dissenting ministers had conformed, and a number of the dignitaries of the Established Church had either come

1. The MSS. are in the British Museum, and in the Dr. Williams' Library.

2. An exalted personage who advanced the new doctrine was Queen Caroline (1683—1737). Having been on close terms of friendship with Leibnitz prior to her marriage, she followed the discussion between him and Samuel Clarke at a later date. She had a great admiration for Clarke, and would have gladly placed him on the Episcopal Bench, "but he repeatedly declined" (Prof. Ward, in *D.N.B.*). "In encouraging the scheme of Comprehension she was trying to promote the ideal of Leibnitz, who had hoped to incline the Church of England in the direction of a union of the Protestant Churches."

from Nonconformist families, or had been trained in Dissenting academies.

In 1741, John Jones was in correspondence with Doddridge, assenting to some remarks of the latter upon a little book which he had published. In the autumn of 1744, John Barker wrote to his friend Doddridge: "the respect you meet with from men of eminence, learning and candour in the Establishment pleases me much, but does not surprise me at all."

About this time, a scheme for a new Reformation in England was inaugurated by the institution of the "Catholic Christianity Society." The date of the paper that contains the proposals is Aug. 10, 1747, and it is an eventful one in the history of the Arian Movement in England.¹ Whether this Society actually met, or whether it was ever in operation, are unanswerable questions at present. The remarkable care with which the rules are drawn up, the ideals set before the members, and the influential list of names within and without the Established Church are signs that the Protestant principle of toleration upon a scriptural basis had reached its fullest degree of expansion in England, and that the prospect of a united religious people had stirred the souls of some prophets of God, in a dark and degraded age.²

The MS. which contains the particulars of this Society suggests that the originator did not actually consult the Dissenting ministers, although he looked to them for support. Doddridge was a confidant in the plans and

1. MS. in Dr. Williams' Library.

2. "Nov. 25, 1753. I was startled by an insertion in the *Inspector* of yesterday, that more robberies and murders had been committed in the last seventeen weeks, than in the whole reign of Queen Anne."—*Letters from Dr. Thomas Herring to William Duncombe, Esq.*, p. 139, 1777.

aspirations of Jones, and an understanding had been arrived at to the extent that the subject of Comprehension began to be discussed, Doddridge in 1748 placing before Archbishop Herring a proposal for an occasional interchange of pulpits. In the winter of 1749-50, Doddridge preached a sermon on the matter before the ministers of Creton, which Barker admired, but he was doubtful as to the results. Samuel Chandler had engaged in some private negotiations, and had laid his plan before the Archbishop of Canterbury, but Nathaniel Neal, a lawyer, and a son of an historian of the Puritans, expressed the opinion to Doddridge that Chandler was too eager a man to settle anything with calmness, and least of all so difficult and extensive a plan as a general Comprehension. Archbishop Herring wrote to Dr. George Benson, that no times called more loudly upon Protestants for real unity and charity; and there are other references which prove that each party was prepared to make concessions for the good of Christianity in England.

While Doddridge and others were improving the relationships between the Established Church and the Dissenters, Jones and his group of friends were attempting to reform the Church from within. In 1749, there was published under his editorship, one of the outstanding books connected with the Arian Movement, which was the first attempt at a revision of the position of the Church of England since the Act of Toleration, and which began a discussion that spread over twenty years.¹

1. The authors of *Free and Candid Disquisitions* have not been identified, and it was not discovered until the beginning of the nineteenth century that Jones had edited it (*Monthly Repository*, vol. ii). During the years 1749 and 1750, the matter was discussed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and in Maty's *Journal Britannique*. In this latter, West and Lyttelton both denied that they were the authors, and Blackburne's son dissociated his father from it.

Jones continued to work publicly and privately for the ideal of a reconstituted Church. His MSS. contain many papers, including a "Rational and Candid Survey of the Thirty-nine Articles," an annotated revision of a printed copy of the Thirty-nine Articles, a series of "Articles of Peace," and letters to various friends.¹

The year after the publication of the "Disquisitions," Jones left Alconbury and went to Bolnhurst, in which year he published a work anonymously.² Several other writers entered the field of controversy, and the year 1751 was important in the story of the Arian Movement. It marked the appearance of "An Essay on Spirit," by Robert Clayton (1695—1758), a descendant of a Lancashire family, who was born and educated in Ireland, and made Bishop of Killala in 1730, and Bishop of Clogher in 1745. His essay was along the lines of Samuel Clarke, and to it he appended some remarks on the Athanasian Creed. The book created much interest, both in England and in Ireland, and in the following year there was published "A Sequel" to it. The writer was William Hopkins (1706—86), a Sussex rector, who took Clarke's theory of Subordination, and expressed in a perfect way the Clarkean spirit, as well as the Clarkean theology of that period.

William Whiston died in the year 1752. By his idiosyncrasies he had put himself completely outside the Movement in the Established Church, and indeed outside any portion of the Movement, but he had lived to see the result

1. Dr. Williams' Library.

2. *An Appeal to Common Reason and Candor*, 1750. Jones seems to have parted company with Edmund Law, who apparently did not go far enough for him. In 1758, he requested that after his decease Law should have his MS. on "The Theory of Death,"—a subject on which Law himself had written—but in 1761, he cancelled this.

of his own action upon the whole of English Christendom, for Jones's "Catholic Christianity Society" was similar in aim to the Society which Whiston had founded in 1715.

In the following year, that is in 1752, Clayton issued another Essay, as well as a "Defence" of the previous Essay. In 1756, he made a speech in the Irish House of Lords in favour of omitting the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds from the Liturgy; but upon becoming aware two years afterwards, that proceedings were about to be taken against him, he was much disturbed at the prospect of losing his bishopric, and contracted a nervous fever, from which he died.

A reference to the recognised followers of Samuel Clarke, gives little idea of the great extent to which his views were held in the Established Church, in the eighteenth century. As his Boyle lectures had taught men a new view of the doctrine of God, so his work on the Trinity taught men to scan a larger horizon than that to which the Church had been accustomed. In almost every work of note coming from the Established clergy in the first half of the century, the methods, ideas and influence of Clarke may be traced, where his view is not always apparent.¹ The pamphlet of Francis Hare is an early example of this fact. John Jortin, D.D. (1698—1770), told Whiston in 1736, that he had given up the Athanasian Creed for some time, and that he interpreted subscription in the laxest way.² Thomas Pyle (1674—

1. Two other names may be given. Thomas Rundle, Bishop of Derry, was an admirer of Clarke; *vide* his Letters to Mrs. Sandys, and *The Reasons Alleged against Dr. Rundle's promotion to the See of Gl—*. This pamphlet was written by Arthur Ashley Sykes. The other name is that of Mark Hildesley, Bishop of the Isle of Man. (*Plain Instructions for Young Persons in, etc.*, 1762.)

2. Whiston thought that Jortin was hardly in earnest, so as to suffer anything for his religion, and Disney, Jortin's biographer, rather agrees, describing him as a disciple of "his admired Erasmus." Job Orton greatly admired him, comparing him with Bourn of Birmingham.

1756), a friend of Hoadly, published some paraphrases "in the manner of Dr. Clarke." One of the most eminent of Clarke's admirers, although not an avowed adherent of his theology, was Edmund Law, D.D. (1703-87). He followed Locke's method in his treatment of Christianity, and his philosophic outlook enabled him to take a broad view of religion, in which the problems of Christian theology lost the exaggerated perspective that had been given to them for centuries.¹

A divine who would have gone further than Samuel Clarke was William Robertson, M.A., D.D. (1705-83). A student of Hutcheson's, he long afterwards described him as, "my ever-honoured master." It was the publication of the "Disquisitions" that directed Robertson's attention to the subject of reform, and after writing a letter to his Bishop, which was not acknowledged, he resigned his benefices in Ireland, in 1764. Two years afterwards he published a book, which has some admirable passages in it, and which is of value for the definitions which were then current of the words treated. He criticises Clarke in a candid way, and does not propose to mend religion, but to preach Christianity by adhering to the Scriptures, and to them alone.²

1. *Reflexions on the Life and Character of Jesus Christ.* Also *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 1745. The 3rd edition, corrected and enlarged, contains much new material. In 1777, Law issued an edition of Locke's works.

2. *An Attempt to Explain the Words Reason, Substance, Person, Creeds, Orthodox, Catholic Church, Subscription and Index Expurgatorius*, by a Presbyter of the Church of England. A written note on the copy in Dr. Williams' Library, by the Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A., is to this effect:—"It was certainly written, possibly printed, before 1764. The first edition in 1766, was anonymous. In March, 1767, it appeared with Robertson's letter to the Bishop in it." Mr. Gordon thinks that this is perhaps what Robertson himself calls the third edition, 1767. Mr. Gordon states that there is but one edition of the main portion, though the title and dedication pages are reprinted.

The best presentation of the Clarkean view is found in the "Appeal" of Hopkins, a book that is entitled to rank next to Clarke's "Scripture Doctrine."¹ In directness of argument, and in frankness of opinion, the work is superior to that of contemporary writers. The period of fear had passed in the Church of England, and in 1760, when Hopkins issued another book, clergymen and others were not so much afraid of expressing their heterodox views as the writers of twenty years before.

It was on the basis of Scripture that Hopkins concentrated his argument, allowing that in addition to the "plain declarations" of Scripture, any direct consequential doctrine may be added; but remarking that the doctrine of the Trinity must be placed among the remote consequential doctrines. In an excellent review of the whole controversy, he makes this striking statement:—

"I am under terrible apprehensions that the state of religion in the Church of England will grow worse and worse, if the governors of it employ no endeavour to begin and accomplish a more perfect reformation, by reducing our Creeds, Articles and Forms of worship to the standard of Scripture, on which foundation the Church was built, and on which alone it can stand secure."²

The discussion in the Established Church, which had taken an ecclesiastical rather than a theological turn, had been followed by the Dissenters. The liberal theologians, together with the conservative Arians were willing to

1. *An Appeal to the Common Sense of All Christian People*, 1753.

2. *The Trinitarian Controversy Reviewed*, 1760. A writer on the orthodox side at this time was the Rev. William Jones, rector of Pluckley, Kent, who published *A Letter to the Common People in Answer, etc.* Hopkins replied to him in the third edition of the *Appeal*; and also to another clergymen, named Landon.

consider the subject of Comprehension, but some of the Arian party were not prepared to accept a revised Prayer Book. In October, 1760, a circular was issued relating to a "rational Liturgy," in which the supporters described themselves as "a Society of Protestants in Liverpool, who cannot comply to the terms of Conformity to the Established Church."¹ This is one of the first instances of radical and aggressive Nonconformity. The scheme was opposed by Dr. John Taylor, who was then at Warrington Academy, but the Liturgy was issued in 1762, when the Octagon Chapel, Liverpool, was opened. It was in brown-paper covers, and the advertisement stated that it was a rough copy of an unfinished work, printed off in this manner to save the trouble of transcribing.² The tentative form was probably adopted, in view of the daring experiment. It aroused much criticism, and Job Orton, an excellent critic, concluded a searching review of it with these words: "Grieved I am, and very much so, to see such an almost deistical composition." The experiment failed, and the Octagon Chapel was ultimately closed.

John Jones, who had been following the course of events, wrote three friendly letters to "our Dissenting brethren," recommending Christian peace and forbearance. Hopkins, in 1763, published an edition of a revised Liturgy (not his own), in which he refers to the Liverpool one. His own desire was to see a scriptural Liturgy, that would pave the way not only for union and concord among Christians, but for a reformation of the National Church.

1. The suggestion arose in 1753, when *A Specimen of Liturgy designed for the Use of a Private Congregation*, was published in London. Dr. Taylor imputed the authorship of the pamphlet to John Seddon, of Warrington, but this apparently was incorrect, although Seddon had a hand in the reprinting of it in the second edition, at Warrington.—*The Christian Reformer*, New Series, vol. x, p. 235.

2. The copy belonging to Jones is in the MSS. at the Dr. Williams' Library.

CHAPTER XII.

“THE CONFESSORAL.”

WE have seen that the source of all this activity among Conformist and Nonconformist for a reconstruction of English Christianity and a reconstitution of the Established Church, was the thoroughly Protestant spirit of both parties. Few theologians of the eighteenth century could avoid the conclusions of Samuel Clarke on his own premises, and many were disposed to accept them. The only way to get rid of them was to refuse to accept the premises, and this is what began to occur, as the ecclesiastic statesmen became aware of the revolution which would take place, if scriptural Christianity came to be the only recognised form of that religion. Alongside the scheme for reform, a reaction began. Archbishop Secker, who understood the Dissenting position, was a type of the reactionary party. Bishop Butler, also originally a Dissenter, might almost be included. Archbishop Herring, whose earlier utterances show that Locke and Clarke had influenced him at that period of his career, came to have stiffer views regarding liberal thought, within five years of his election to the See of Canterbury. In the month of November, 1753, when the discussion on the “Disquisitions” was animated, he wrote to Dr. Carter of Deal, who had been presented for not reading the Athanasian Creed, that he abhorred every tendency to the Trinitarian controversy, and that the manner in which it was always managed was the disgrace and ruin of Christianity.

Warburton, writing to Doddridge shortly after the "Disquisitions" had appeared, while praising the candour and charity of them, said that he knew of "certain science" that not the least alteration would be made in the ecclesiastical system. The present Ministers, he added, were bred up under, and act entirely on the maxims of the last (Sir R. Walpole); and one of his principles was not to stir what was at rest.

Notwithstanding these reactionary tendencies, the scheme for a larger measure of freedom, and a more scriptural doctrine continued to grow. The Thirty-nine Articles were variously dealt with, from Clarke's suggestion to drop them, and Blackburne's to accept them in a qualified sense, to that of Jones, who revised them privately. The wider question of subscription to *any* Articles of Faith was re-started by Samuel Chandler, a Dissenting minister.¹ His contribution was partly in the interests of progressive theology, and partly in the interests of the Arian clergy of the Church of England, as the ministers of the meeting-houses were not requested by their congregations to subscribe, except where a reaction had taken place. Chandler was answered by George Harvest, M.A., a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge. He based his argument for subscription to the Articles of the Church (presumably a National Church), "on the foot of necessity," being persuaded that the only scriptural subscription which would be satisfactory, would be a belief *identical* with that contained in the words of Scripture.²

By the publication of "The Confessional," the full extent of the reformation scheme appeared. It was

1. *The Case of Subscription to Explanatory Articles of Faith, etc.*, 1748.

2. *The Reasonableness and Necessity of Subscription*. 3rd edition, 1772 (Dr. Williams' Library).

written by Francis Blackburne (1705—87), whose one and only living was the rectorship of Richmond, Yorkshire, to which he was appointed in 1739. He was an exponent in the middle of the eighteenth century, of the philosophy of John Locke, whose writings he had absorbed in his undergraduate days at Cambridge. His theological opinion was more pronounced than Locke's, consisting of a Calvinism of a most liberal cast. Like other reformers in the Established Church during this period of re-action, he did not openly take up a position on the controversy regarding the Trinity, but followed the discussion privately. He was on friendly terms with Priestley, who for a time was at Leeds, and previously, when Priestley was tutor at Warrington academy, Blackburne sent his two sons there to be educated.

Before the publications of "the Disquisitions," Blackburne, on the recommendation of Edmund Law, entered into correspondence with John Jones, who allowed him to peruse the MS. of that book. Blackburne in every way showed his readiness to adopt the lines suggested by "The Disquisitions" although (according to his biographer) he could not conform his style to the "milky phraseology" of that volume. He however defended it in a pamphlet, directed against a Taunton clergyman named Boswell.¹

Blackburne's mind turned particularly to the subject of subscription, in its broadest and most consistent aspect. It should be remembered that while Clarke and his followers had abhorred sophistical subscription (or professed to do so), they had originated a system of their own, whereby they managed to square the requirements of the Church of England with their private opinions. This they did with apparent sincerity, and even Black-

1. *An Apology for the Authors of the Free and Candid Disquisitions.* Blackburne's Works, vol. ii (1804).

burne accepted the Archdeaconry of Cleveland as late as 1750, and subscribed, persuaded by the reasonings of Dr. Clarke, by a letter from Dr. Law, and by the liberal concession in Article VI of the Church of England! Blackburne never subscribed again, and eight years later, when he replied to the Rev. Dr. Powell, he referred to the casuistry of a sophistical subscription.

The "Confessional" may be ranked as one of the most important books issued in England, in the eighteenth century, if it be estimated by the amount of discussion that it created.¹ It remained for some years unpublished after it was written, but in 1766, through the interest of Thomas Hollis, Esq., it appeared anonymously, and a second edition was called for the following year.

The book caused much excitement. Archbishop Secker, whose "indignation was excessive," eventually succeeded in finding out the author.² Nothing however could restrain the acceptability of the book, and it did more than anything else to mature the scheme suggested by the "Disquisitions." In addition, Blackburne enunciated the principle upon which a National Church was possible, by advocating "A scriptural Institution, on a legal basis."

In 1768, Francis Stone, M.A., F.S.A. (1738?—1813), who had become Arian while acting as curate to Henry Taylor, published a pamphlet, being at the time rector of Cold Norton, Essex.³

1. The ecclesiastical ferment which was taking place may be observed in many ways, and not the least important was by means of correspondence. Blackburne issued a selection of these anonymously. *Vide A Collection of Letters and Essays in favour of Public Liberty, first published in the News-Papers in the years 1764—1770.* Three vols. London, 1774.

2. Secker had been trained as a Dissenter, and a number of letters relating to a discussion which arose, are re-printed in Blackburne's Collection of Letters.—*ut supra*.

3. Stone ultimately became a Unitarian, and issued *An Unitarian Christian Minister's Plea for Adherence to the Church of England*, 1808.

It was Stone's pamphlet that was the means of initiating an appeal to Parliament. About the end of the year 1770, Blackburne received an anonymous letter, saying that some were desirous of finding out how far the legislature were disposed to release from the obligations of subscription. William Robertson and Theophilus Lindsey encouraged this new development, and eventually, Blackburne drew up proposals, which were immediately printed. Shortly afterwards, a meeting was held at the Feathers Tavern in the Strand, Stone being in the chair, and an Association was formed. A petition was signed some time later by about two hundred persons, and presented to Parliament on February 6, 1772. Among those who expressed approbation of the petition was Henry Read, the only surviving Non-subscribing minister of the Salters' Hall Synod. The declaration which the petitioners wished to have legalised was the following:—

“We declare as in the presence of Almighty God, that we believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a revelation of the mind and will of God, and that we receive them as the Rule of our Faith and practice.”

One striking feature of this remarkable agitation, was the support which the petitioners received from other parties. Nearly all the Arian Dissenting ministers throughout England were prepared to support this appeal, as well as those of the orthodox party, who were liberal in their theology. Richard Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff, also gave it a general approval. He dissociated himself from the Clarkian party, but acknowledging no criterion except that of Scripture, he expressed himself in sympathy with a reformation in the Established Church, if it could be achieved without disorder or uncharity.

The action of the Church of England clergy in the 1772 petition, may be taken as the climax of the Arian Movement in the Established Church in England. The cases of Lindsey, Disney and Gilbert Wakefield owe their origin to the failure of the petition; but most of the clergy who had signed remained in the Established Church, declining further preferment. A number of events at this period retarded the scheme of reformation in the Church of England, and for a time checked the hope of greater liberty, but a reflex result of the action of the petitioners is observable in the fact that after important modifications in the Act of 1779, the law against Unitarianism was repealed in 1813, without any opposition.

The views of Clarke continued to be held with more or less divergence, by many of the clergymen of the Established Church until the close of the eighteenth century. A scholarly writer of this school was Henry Taylor, M.A. (1711-85), who held several livings, being at one time vicar of Crawley, which he held with Portsmouth, through the patronage of Chancellor Hoadly.

In his first work he resumed the controversy on its theological lines, concerning himself more with the question of the divinity of Christ than with that of the Trinity.¹ His theory was that Jesus Christ was the Angel of the Covenant, or visible Jehovah, who so often appeared to the patriarchs in Schekinah, and gave the Law. This was the opinion of the ancients before the Council of Nicea, until it was rejected by St. Augustine to make way for the doctrine of Consubstantiality, "which has rendered the whole system of Christianity unintelligible, and undermined the Christian faith." Taylor's

1. *The Apology of Ben Mordecai*, 1771-77.

opinion was that the only scheme which could explain the difficult question was that of Apollinaris.

In the posthumous volume published by his son, a clergyman who accepts the father's position, Taylor's views are unaltered.¹ He refers to the view of Josiah Tucker, D.D., Dean of Gloucester, and thinks that Tucker has run into Sabellianism unawares. William Hopkins and John Bristed had also written against Tucker. The former reminded Tucker that since the "Disquisitions" had appeared several reformed liturgies had come out, to which no rational minister could have any material objection; and the latter contended with such eagerness that the Bible is the only foundation of Christian truth, that it is difficult to understand how he was able to remain in the Established Church.

1. *Considerations on Ancient and Modern Creeds Compared*, by the Rev. Henry Taylor, LL.B., 1788

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CLIMAX OF THE MOVEMENT.

THE transition from Arianism to Socinianism and Unitarianism is more easily located by events, than by persons and dates. Sometimes, the two views are found in the one Association, as in the Dudley Double Lecture, where both parties appear in the beginning of the nineteenth century; and an unusual case occurs in the pastorate of Poor Jewry Lane, London, where Lardner preached Socinianism in the morning, and Benson Arianism in the afternoon.¹ An early sign of the inevitable trend of Arianism was seen in the ordination of Caleb Fleming (1698—1779). Entering the ministry in his fortieth year, after having been engaged in business, Fleming was ordained, virtually on his own terms, at Bartholomew Close, London, in 1738. His only confession of faith was his statement that the New Testament contained a revelation worthy of God to give, and of man to receive. This rejection of the Old Testament, and subjective interpretation of the New, were in sharp contrast with the declarations which had previously been demanded and given at ordinations.

A significant action was taken by the Assembly of the Exeter ministers, in May, 1753. The question was brought forward whether the Assembly should recommend any candidate, who would not declare his faith in the

1. One of the last attempts to withstand Socinianism will be found in *A Defence of the Arian Hypothesis*, by "Moderatus," in *The Theological Repository*, vol. iv, p. 153.

deity of the Son and the Holy Ghost. The word "deity" had been displaced by the word "divinity" for many years, and had the question been decided in the negative, it would have been a protest against the spread of broader doctrine than that which had been prevalent for some time; but the voting disclosed a divided opinion.

A landmark of the transition period was the publication of the posthumous tracts of Moses Lowman (1680—1752). These were edited by Lardner, Chandler and Sandecock, and published in 1756. Lardner's view of the Schekinah was that it was properly the place to which all worshippers directed prayers, as the throne and seat of God's presence; and that to address prayers to the Schekinah was to offer them to an object "besides and against the intention of every worshipper, and against the chief principle of all religion and religious worship, according to the light of Nature." Lowman's conclusion after examining the prologue of St. John's Gospel, and describing it as an imaginary preface, is that the teaching of the passage represents Christ as a person in whom "the Word dwelt, or Schekinized."¹

A memorable event in the story of the Arian Movement was the publication of Lardner's letter on the Logos. By his writings he had attained a great reputation, and as his posthumous volume of discourses prove, had been preaching a doctrine which he identified as that "of the Unitarians, or the Nazarenes." The substance of this view was that there is one God, even the Father; and that Jesus Christ is a man with a reasonable soul and human body, especially favoured of God. In 1759, Lardner published a letter which he had written nearly thirty years before to Viscount Barrington on this subject. It had the effect of bringing a number of ministers to a definite opinion,

1. *Three Tracts*, by the late Reverend and learned Moses Lowman, 1756.

Priestley being one of them, but it confirmed Edward Harwood in Arianism.¹

Two prominent Socinians in the provinces during this period, were John Seddon and Paul Cardale. Seddon was a minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, and when the Arian academy at Warrington was founded, he was so singular in his view that Priestley wrote, "we all wondered at him." Cardale was one of those able and advanced students whom Ebenezer Latham had sent out, from his academy at Findern. He appears to have had a certain adherence to Calvinistic views while holding an assistantship among the Presbyterians at Kidderminster, but in 1733, he went to Evesham, where he spent a long ministry. He had a "decisive" influence in the Midlands, and according to Fleming, his view was acceptable to many ministers of the Church of Scotland.²

An external factor of some importance in the transition period of the Arian Movement, was the change of the basis of philosophic thought. For at least the first quarter of the century, the philosophical influence of Locke was paramount. Among the newer theologians, Hutcheson became the guide, and it was his philosophy mingling with the theology of the Arian Movement, that did more than anything else to dispel the narrow environment which sixteenth, and especially seventeenth Calvinism had created.³

An attempt was made to withstand this new combination of philosophy and theology, by some of the conserva-

1. See note 3 on p. 128.

2. Two of his works were *The True New Testament Doctrine of Jesus*, and *Enquiry Whether we have any Scriptural Warrant for a Direct Address to the Son, or the Holy Ghost*, 1776. The latter was a tract published posthumously.

3. A lucid account of Hutcheson's philosophy, from a modern estimate, may be seen in Prof. Seth's *English Philosophers and Schools of Philosophy*, 1912.

tive Arians. Richard Price challenged the philosophy of Hutcheson,¹ as Dr. John Taylor had done.

The transition from English Socinianism to Unitarianism was greatly assisted through the personality of one man. The religious opinions of Joseph Priestley, LL.D., F.R.S. (1733—1804) are a good illustration of the phases of belief that were possible, in the eighteenth century. He was brought up in a Calvinist home, that maintained the traditional sobriety of conduct, without the traditional adherence to dogma. His father was a Calvinist, attached to Whitefield's writings, but not a bigoted one, or given to the speculative points in the orthodox system. His "excellent aunt" was Calvinistic in principle, but was far from confining salvation to the elect. In dispensing hospitality she welcomed orthodox and heterodox to her home, and among these were John Walker, and Graham of Halifax, the latter of whom shared Priestley's confidences throughout life. Young Priestley passed through a time of distress in his struggle with the Calvinistic scheme, and applying for membership in the local meeting-house, he was declined, because he was not conscious of a personal and subjective change of heart.

After a very good preliminary training, on account of which he was excused the first year's study, and part of the second, Priestley entered Daventry academy with those students who had been transferred from Doddridge's academy. It was a new world to him, and his resourceful and inquiring mind assimilated the best ideals, intellectual and religious. At the time of his entrance into the academy his view was Arminian, and he had not rejected

1. *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*, 1756.

the Trinity or the Atonement. Through the sub-tutor Clark, Arian views were discussed. It was not theology but philosophy that gave Priestley his new position, and Hartley's "Observations" confirmed him in the belief of the doctrine of Necessity, "which I first learned from Collins."

Priestley's first settlement was at Needham Market, and during that pastorate of three years his opinions matured quickly. He made several changes in the affairs of the meeting-house, introducing the catechism of Isaac Watts,¹ and delivering a course of lectures on the "Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion," a work which he had composed at the academy, and which had been revised by the sub-tutor. During this pastorate, he parted with the doctrines of Inspiration and Atonement, accepting for a time the view of Tomkins of Stoke Newington on the latter, but ultimately giving up the doctrine altogether. He left a MS. in the hands of Caleb Fleming and Lardner, who published about half of it. John Taylor gave him no satisfaction, and he was so keenly progressive, that even Lardner hesitated to accept his views. Kippis and Benson were among his earliest and best friends, but Kippis advised Priestley to publish his opinions under the character of an unbeliever.

In his pastorate at Nantwich, Cheshire, he recomposed a work on Paul, and from that place he was invited to be tutor of languages at Warrington academy, in the year that Taylor died. Priestley adopted the views of his colleagues, and by means of Hartley's philosophy, was able to supplant the older philosophy represented by Taylor

1. It was published in the year that Strong issued his catechism, and was probably intended as a reply. A copy in Dr. Williams' Library.

and Richard Price, and to change the philosophic basis of the Arian Movement.¹

In 1767, he went to the Presbyterian meeting-house at Mill Hill, Leeds, and there reading Lardner's letter on the Logos, which had been published in 1759, he became "what is called a Socinian."

A struggle now arose between Arianism and Socinianism. In 1783, an attempt was made to form a society on a Socinian basis, which caused some concern to the Arian party. Edward Harwood, D.D. (1729-94), referred in this year to "the present triumphant progress of Socinianism," especially among the Dissenters. He returned to the fundamental distinction between the Arian and Socinian positions by declaring that we must have new Scriptures, and a new revelation before Socinianism could be proved; for he was persuaded that it would never be satisfactorily demonstrated from the present sacred volume.

The sermons of Richard Price, D.D. (1723-1791) were a feature of the transition period, representing as they did, the Arian position. They were answered by Priestley, who in turn was answered by Price.² Hugh Worthington (1752-1813), the well-known minister of Salters' Hall,

1. A work which reflects a view adverse to the positions of Hartley and Hume is, *A Chinese Fragment, containing an Enquiry into the present state of Religion in England*, London, 1786 (a copy in Dr. Williams' Library). It was written by Ely Bates (wrongly attributed in the Dr. Williams' Library Catalogue to Bishop Thomas Percy), and in a vein of gentle satire represents a Chinese philosopher making an examination of religion in England. The book abounds with phrases like the following:—"The Bible, it seems, has the misfortune not to have been composed by a philosopher." "Liberty is a tender thing, and the liberty of Britons the tenderest of all; and would no doubt be at an end, and the Constitution subverted, if they enjoyed not the noble privilege of ruining themselves." The section on the English Socinians is particularly crisp.

2. In the second edition of his *Sermons on the Christian Doctrine*, 1787.

and an Arian, in his anxiety to stop the progress of Unitarianism (which he called Socinianism), was one of a small party that included Carpenter of Stourbridge, Crabb of Cirencester and Geary of Beaconsfield, which met at Chapel House, Oxfordshire, in 1789. The meeting brought out divergencies of opinion, and appears to have had no effect upon the trend of things.¹

Two years before this event, Hugh Farmer died (1714—1787). He was one of a small group of popular preachers among the Protestant Dissenters. During a very long pastorate at Walthamstowe, he exercised an influence which was similar to that of his old tutor, Doddridge.² Kippis considered him one of the best preachers that had appeared among the Protestant Dissenters, and although his view on the subject of the Trinity was never really known, it was liberal in his early ministry, but conservative compared with that of Priestley, whose publications he criticised.

Two Arians who appear at this final phase of the Movement were Roger Flexman, D.D. (1708—95), and Micaijah Towgood (1700—92). Both of these venerable ministers had maintained a definite Arianism, in opposition to the later development. Flexman's historical ability obtained for him an appointment, as one of the compilers of the General Index to the Journals of the House of Commons. In 1783, Harwood described Flexman as one who understood the Socinian controversy from its origin, better than any man then living.

1. A late instance of the view of liberal theology may be seen in Benjamin Fawcett's *Candid Reflections, etc.*, 1777. 2nd edition, enlarged, 1778.

2. His treatise on *The Temptation* was very acceptable, especially in the West of England.

Towgood retained his Arianism to the end, firmly believing in the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, and accepting on a theory of his own, which did not connect it with Original Sin or the fact of the death of Christ.¹ The Arians of this period had difficulty in deciding their attitude on the subject of the worship of Christ. It was even suggested that the ordinance of public worship was unnecessary. Towgood was one of the last of the English Arians to retain the worship of Christ, which he did at the Communion.²

In the beginning of 1791, the Unitarian Society was formed, "for promoting Christian knowledge and the practice of virtue by distributing such books as are considered by the society to be most free from the errors by which Christianity has been so long sullied and obscured." The publications approved of were varied, such as "The Scripture Account of God and Christ," by Hopton Haynes (1672?—1749), Lardner on "The Logos,"³ and the writings of Price and Priestley. The list of subscribers contained the names of ministers of congregations, and representatives of old Dissenting families; and occasionally the congregation itself, or an anonymous well-wisher. In 1792, the Western Unitarian Society was formed on similar lines.

1. His final view is in *The Grounds of Faith in Jesus Christ*, second edition, published 1784.

2. The *Memoirs* of Towgood were written by Joshua Toulmin, D.D. (1740—1815).

3. In 1784, Lardner's *Two Schemes of a Trinity Considered, and the Divine Unity Asserted* was published posthumously. It consisted of four discourses, which had been preached in 1747.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXTENT OF THE MOVEMENT.

IT is an interesting experience to observe the roots of the Arian Movement in the literature and theology of various countries, but in no way did it affect the views of a country outside England so powerfully as it did Scotland.

The welfare of the English Nonconformist had always concerned the Church of Scotland, and on the visit of Edmund Calamy to its Assembly, occasion was taken by the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh to confer degrees upon him. The relaxation of Calvinism may be traced from the Act of Toleration, but in 1697, at the execution of Thomas Aikenhead, a young student, the Church of Scotland passed a stringent resolution against deniers of the Trinity.

Aberdeen was the first to encourage a liberal theology, and Edinburgh followed, although it was at Glasgow that the Movement became focussed. This university had become closely connected with the Protestant Dissenters of England, through the bursaries established by the Will of Daniel Williams, D.D., the founder of the famous London library. It was during the time of Professor John Simson, that the theological teaching of the university assumed a new character.¹ At his

1. *The Case of Mr. John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow*, second edition, 1727.

trial for heresy, it became clear that he was acquainted with the writings of Samuel Clarke, and that he had virtually adopted the Clarkean view of the Trinity; but in his lectures he had acquired (to use the phrase of Lord Grange) "the art of teaching heresy orthodoxly."

When at length Simson was suspended from carrying out his professional duties, an event happened that assisted the development of liberal thought. Francis Hutcheson (1694—1746) had been a student of the University when Simson was teaching, and returned to Dublin, where he set up an academy, which he carried on for eight or nine years. His theological views had been expanded partly by Archbishop King's well-known work, and partly by Simson's opinions, and his philosophy had been drawn from Shaftesbury, Locke, Samuel Clarke, and Berkeley, his own view coming to be a link between Locke and Hume. Had he accepted an invitation given to him to become a Bishop of the Church of England, he would have been a strong advocate of the Clarkean theology.

When the theological professorship was vacant at Glasgow University in 1743, Hutcheson supported the candidature of William Leechman, who had been one of his students, declaring that Leechman would put a new face on theology in Scotland.

It was through Leechman that the opinions of the English Arians came to be popular in Scotland, and he may be regarded as one of the founders of the school of Moderatism. He corresponded with Dr. John Taylor, the Arian, and on one occasion visited England (where he met Taylor at Warrington) and called upon a number of his old students, who were in the Dissenting ministry. He encouraged such men in his own Church, as William M'Gill, D.D., whose book on the Death of Christ followed

the lines of Taylor's work on Atonement.¹ This book by its references proves that the Arian Movement in England and Moderatism in Scotland were identical.²

The Arian Movement in Ireland although operating in a restricted area, is clearly marked, and owes its origin to English latitudinarianism. One of the earliest and most distinguished leaders was John Abernethy, M.A. (1680—1740), who after graduating in the University of Glasgow, and studying divinity at Edinburgh, returned to Ireland, where he was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry. It was Bishop Hoadly's notable sermon that turned him to the progressive party. In the year of the Salters' Hall Synod, Abernethy preached a sermon at Belfast which indicated his sympathy with the New-scheme men, and he became the leader of the "Belfast Society," which was afterwards known as the Non-subscribers.

The Arian Movement in Ireland is a story by itself, and to deal with it adequately, separate treatment would be necessary. It proceeded along the lines adopted in England of a Scripture-Christianity, and the results were the same.³ An illustration of the close connection of the Arian Movement in England, Ireland and Scotland, is that when Richard Baron, an English Dissenting minister, was a student at Glasgow University, Hutcheson gave Baron a number of Abernethy's tracts, which Baron afterwards re-published.

1. *Practical Essay on the Death of Christ*, 1786.

2. A satirical piece on the Moderate party that ought not to be overlooked is *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, by John Witherspoon, D.D. (1723—1794). The title was suggested by Shaftesbury's book, and the article is in an edition of Witherspoon's works, pub. Edinburgh, 1815, vol. vi.

3. A leading minister among the Irish Non-subscribers was James Duchal, D.D. (1697—1761). In 1753, he published, *Presumptive Arguments for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Religion*.

Another striking testimony to the work of the English Arians, was the influence that they exercised in the constitution of the Episcopal Church of the United States.

Samuel Provoost, the son of Huguenot parents, and born in New York, entered Peterhouse College, Cambridge, during the mastership of Edmund Law.¹ After his ordination, he became rector of Trinity Church, New York. Returning to this country when the subject of an Episcopalian Church for America was being discussed, and having apparently received nomination and support from America, he was consecrated at Lambeth on February 4, 1787, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of New York.

On the same day, William White, who had studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, and who had previously been in America, was consecrated Protestant Bishop of Philadelphia; and the next day Provoost and White left for their respective spheres.

The Arian party in the Church of England had hopes that if a reconstruction of their Church should ever take place, their opinions would prevail, and they were watching their opportunity. As early as 1760, Hopkins had recommended one of Whiston's works to the "plantations" of Great Britain, in view of a, "reorganization of Christianity." John Disney, who in 1782 had become assistant to Lindsey at Essex Street Unitarian Chapel, had been a student with Provoost at Peterhouse. Three days before the consecration of Provoost, Disney handed him an exact copy of the MS. alterations which Samuel Clarke had made in his copy of the book of Common Prayer. Disney had transcribed these notes from the original volume in the British Museum, "in the earnest hope that it might be useful, on a further revisal of the present Liturgy of

1. In the College records the form of the name is Provost.

the Protestant Church in America, so that they might in their public devotions acknowledge none other than the One only living and true God."

This explains the discussion in the Convention at Philadelphia, in 1789, the outcome of which was a much modified form of the English Prayer Book. An examination of the changes, and a comparison between them and the annotations of Clarke, a copy of which Disney had given to Provoost, will satisfy the student that the English Arians permanently influenced the Episcopal Church of the United States.¹

The most impressive tribute to the worth of the scholarship of the English Arians, was the way in which their works were published in various countries of Europe. In addition to the writings of those more or less connected with the Movement, such as Doddridge and Sherlock (the latter's "Trial of the Witnesses" reaching thirteen editions in German), there were evidences of direct appreciation of the English Arians. Lardner's influence was very great, especially in Germany. Semler translated the "Essay on Sacrifices," by Arthur Ashley Sykes. John Jackson's edition of "Novatian," published in 1728, was the standard one in England until the recent textbook on this subject, and the Venice edition of the Fathers, by Gallandi (1767), followed Jackson's text, this edition being used by Migne, the French Catholic theologian (1800—1875).

1. Disney's own copy of Clarke's book is in the Dr. Williams' Library. Through the kindness of Dr. Greer, Bishop of New York, the present writer has received a letter on the subject from Dr. Samuel Hart, the Historiographer of the Episcopal Church. It appears that the book which Disney gave to Provoost cannot be traced, but from the facts in Dr. Hart's letter, there is no difficulty in arriving at the above conclusion.

What will be considered by many as the most interesting illustration of the extent of the Arian Movement, is the fact that John David Michaelis, one of the originators of the science of Biblical criticism in Germany, received inspiration for his life-work by conversation and correspondence with the English Arians. The acceptability of the English Deists to German scholars began about 1735, and in the year 1741, Michaelis, who was then twenty-four years of age, spent twelve months in England, the greater portion at Oxford, where he examined the MSS. in the Bodleian Library. When he went to Germany as professor of Eastern languages in the University of Halle, his progressive views caused some uneasiness, and in 1745 he removed to Göttingen, where Mosheim, Haller and Gesner were. In 1746, he published a Latin edition of George Benson's work on the Epistle of St. James, adding his own footnotes. A year afterwards, he published Peirce on "Hebrews," endeavouring also, but without encouragement, to issue Hallett's "Notes." From about 1750, he proceeded with greater rapidity than the English scholars, although the "Dissertations" of Benjamin Kennicott (1718-83), issued in 1752, gave an "accidental impulse" to the researches of Michaelis.¹

Many other examples could be given, of the wide extent which the opinions of the Arians and liberal theologians of England were able to cover. The "Discourses" of John Jennings were translated into German, by Professor Francke of Halle. The value of the edition of the New Testament by Daniel Mace, the Presbyterian minister of Newbury, Berkshire, was recognised by J. C. Wolff, and a number of the readings accepted. Some of Doddridge's writings were translated into German and Dutch. Edmund Law's "Theory" was translated into

1. *Monthly Repository*, vol. vi, p. 4 ff.

German in 1771, Blackburne's "Confessional" was translated into Dutch, and a work by Soame Jenyns, Esq., appeared in several foreign languages.¹

These facts gleaned from occasional references, indicate the widespread influence of that theological era which has been described as the Arian Movement in England. It is a surprising aspect of the eighteenth century, and it alters the customary opinion regarding the condition of religious life in England throughout that period. It must be acknowledged that theological preaching and "experimental" preaching had drifted apart, until the latter was almost lost, but the preaching of the eighteenth century, more intellectual than theological, was an attempt to free the pulpit from a traditional phraseology that had grown obsolete and insincere. In this praiseworthy endeavour, the English Arians and the liberal scholars took a noble part; and the failure to reconstruct English Christianity on Arian premises must be attributed to the inherently weak character of such theology, rather than to its ideal.

1. *A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.* It forms the fourth volume of an edition of his works in 1790.

CHAPTER XV.

COUNTER-MOVEMENTS.

ONE of the gratifying results of the Arian Movement in England, was its attitude towards Deism. That type of belief which began to appear in English religious thought at the close of the seventeenth century, was more like what is now known as Theism, and in its early stage was identified with Socinianism.¹ The eighteenth century form of Deism largely arose out of Locke's methods, although Locke himself was emphatically a believer, and held the opinion that an atheist ought not to be tolerated.

The year 1706, may be taken as an approximate date for the permanent appearance of Deism.² Samuel Clarke had introduced, "a new kind of language into our ethical writings" by his lectures on the Being and Attributes of God, and at the same time had originated the synthetic method of treatment which made the mingling of Christianity and philosophy fashionable in sermons.

It was through the publication of a work by Matthew Tindal (1657—1733), that the discussion became eager.³ George Hickes (1642—1715), the Non-juror, called it "downright Atheism," but identified it with Deism.⁴

1. *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England*, pub. 1696.

2. Charles Gildon's *The Deist's Manual* (1705) illustrates the difference between Deism and Atheism. It is an answer by a layman to Hobbes and Spinoza, and is in defence of *Revealed Religion*, the influence of Locke being perceptible.

3. *The Rights of the Christian Church, etc.*, 1706

4. *Spinoza Revived*, 1709.

The change that was taking place at this time in the social life of England arose chiefly from the new way at looking at life, in its intellectual, scientific and religious aspects. When Anthony Collins issued his work on *Free-Thinking*,¹ Richard Bentley made an anonymous reply from Leipsic, in which he refers to the "buffoonery growing up into impiety, and profaning the most adorable names, 'holy apostles,' 'blessed Saviour,' and 'ever-Blessed Trinity' by a fulsome repetition or a blasphemous irony."²

The discourses of Anthony Collins were radical in their treatment of Christianity,³ but it was in the second work of Matthew Tindal that the aggressiveness of Deism became marked.⁴ From this time the Arians proceeded cautiously, and the fear that Revealed Religion was in danger compelled a number of the Arians to reply to Tindal's book. It is an impressive fact in the history of the Arian Movement that at a stage like this, when it would have been easy for Arianism to turn to Deism, not more than two or three ministers out of the Arian party of the Establishment and Protestant Dissent accepted the principles of the Deists. One of these was Thomas Morgan, M.D., who after an education at Bridgwater academy, was ordained to the pastorate of an Independent congregation at Burton, Somerset. His confession of faith at that time was orthodox, but later he described himself as a "Christian Deist." In his second pastorate at Marlborough, the Trinitarian controversy occupied his

1. *A Discourse of Free-Thinking*, 1713. In the earliest use of it, the term "Free-Thinker" had no sinister association.

2. *Remarks Upon a Late Discourse of Free-Thinking*, by "Phileleutherus Lipsiensis," 1713.

3. *The Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, 1724.

4. *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 1730. Henry Stebbing (1687-1763), an orthodox clergyman, published two sermons against this book.

thoughts as well as the Virgin Birth, and upon the latter subject he wrote to Lardner. It was, however, the publication of "The Moral Philosopher" that annoyed the Dissenters. The views there taken of the Old Testament were such as are commonly held to-day, but on account of their novelty and of the rise of Deism, their destructive tendency was more serious then than now. The most complete answer to Morgan was given by John Leland, D.D. (1691—1766), an Arian who held a pastorate in Dublin. It was the irreverent way in which Morgan handled the subject, that disturbed religious men. Warburton called Morgan "a blasphemous fellow," and Leland referred to the desire on the part of the Deists to give an odious or a ludicrous turn to everything where Revelation was concerned.

Similarly, the anonymous book of Henry Dodwell (*ob.* 1784) caused much confusion, as well as indignation.¹ Some mistook it for a defence of Christianity, but Doddrige with his usual perception saw that it was a most artful attempt on the part of a Deist to subvert Christianity, and he answered it in three Letters. George Benson also took up the matter, and in a book the title of which echoed that of Locke's famous work, he made a new and notable definition of Faith, which he described as being firstly, a willingness to examine, and secondly, a candour of mind to receive Truth upon proper evidence.²

An illustration of the curious position that could be adopted by a layman of the Church of England towards Deism, is seen in the case of Thomas Chubb (1679—1747). Turning from business pursuits,—he was first a glover and then a tallow-chandler—he devoted his leisure to the study

1. *Christianity not Founded on Argument*, 1742.

2. *The Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*.

of theology. Having read a work of Whiston's, he put himself into communication with Clarke and Whiston, the latter of whom paid the expenses of publication of a tract which Chubb issued in 1715.¹ Chubb borrowed his arguments and his terms from the metaphysics and ethics of Samuel Clarke, but became a Deist, although he maintained a connection with the Established Church until his death.

The situation became grave for the defenders of Christianity. It had arisen not altogether from the negative criticism of the credentials of Christianity, but also from the disparagement of the *A priori* method which had met with acceptance through the skilful use of it by Clarke, but which by the middle of the eighteenth century was depreciated. Berkeley's philosophy was favoured, although Hoadly, clinging to the old type, said he did not understand it any more than if it were written in Syriac; while Hume, representing a new type, thought that the principles of Berkeley's philosophy were sceptical in character. Berkeley, however, displaced Clarke's scheme, and that fact alone was sufficient to account for a disturbance in the realm of theology in England, in the eighteenth century.

A writer who preceded Butler, and who may have given Butler the idea for his memorable work, was Peter Browne, Bishop of Cork. In his book he adapted an argument of Archbishop King's, and examined the limit and procedure of the Human Understanding.² Berkeley criticised the view, contending that Browne's position

1. *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted*, 1715. In 1717, Chubb issued *The Supremacy of the Father Vindicated*, as a reply to *Arianism Anatomized*, by John Claggett.

2. *The Limit and Procedure of the Human Understanding*. (A copy in the Manchester University Library.)

nearly led to Atheism, but Browne replied.¹ He defined in a clever way the difference between metaphor and analogy, and if at every point the argument is not strong, it exhibits a lucidity and effectiveness that must have weakened the assertions of the Deists, and checked the dangerous tendency of the Arians to resolve the Christological phrases into metaphor.

The fame of Bishop Butler's "Analogy" is universal to-day, but it was more acceptable to the conservative theologians at a later and reactionary period, than it was at the time of its publication. Butler does not appear to have expressed himself regarding the Trinity, or to have mingled in that controversy, and his mind seems to have turned entirely to the subject of theology proper. His book was in the main directed at the Deists, and although written when he was a member of the Established Church, it probably was generated through his studies at the Dissenting Academy of Tewkesbury, from which place he corresponded with Samuel Clarke.

In addition to the fine work of Leland and of Samuel Chandler, the whole subject of Miracles was carefully examined by the English Arians, and the liberal theologians, and a valuable writer in the latter group was Hugh Farmer.

Whatever criticism may be passed upon the Arian Movement, and its result upon dogmatic Christianity, it must always be reckoned as a religious force, full of the imitation of Christ, and protecting the vital doctrines of Morality, and the wish for, and hope of Immortality. These ideas may appear to many to be the minimum for a practical religion, but the English Deists were not prepared to grant them. There was never any association

1. *Things Divine and Supernatural Conceived by Analogy*, 1733 (Manchester University Library).

between Deism and Arianism, yet the trend of affairs greatly alarmed the ecclesiastical authorities, and a reaction was set up against liberal theology of every kind, which affected the Arian Movement.

One of the extraordinary facts of the Movement, was its inability to modify the formularies of English Christianity. It is a characteristic of the English people, that however liberal in principle and opinion they may be, they are inherently conservative in practice. If anything could have destroyed traditional theology in England, it was certain portions of the Arian theology. It appeared inevitable that the conscience of English Christendom should decide and act; but it did neither. For a time, the theology of the eighteenth century was indefinable, but ultimately it returned to the original orthodox position.

The rise of the Evangelical party in the Established Church, may be traced to William Law. This Non-juror and High Church clergyman, by his books on "The Serious Call," and "Christian Perfection" prepared the way for the rise of a spiritual fervour that produced the evangelical Arminianism of Methodism, and the evangelical Calvinism of the modern Low Church party. The Low Church party emphasised the Calvinistic character of the Articles, and Toplady, an eminent representative, made a special study of this subject; while Whitefield introduced a style of preaching that was a pleasing contrast to the perfunctory style portrayed in Hogarth's caricature,¹ and in the lines of Cowper.²

1. In Hogarth's picture of the Sleepy Congregation, as finally retouched by him in 1762, he has placed over a decorated window, the figure of an inverted triangle, which is an intentional comment on the heterodoxy of the Established Church—a triangle being the symbol of the Trinity.

2. In "The Task" (1783) beginning:—"Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul, Were he on earth would hear, approve, and own, Paul should himself direct me; I would trace his master-strokes, and draw from his design."

Methodism began within the Established Church. It was only inflexible circumstances, that made it a separate denomination. The expansion of Methodism proceeded, as the new ideas arose in John Wesley's mind. The eventful evening when Wesley attended a meeting of a Moravian Society, was the beginning within him of the joyous assurance of a free salvation. From that time his zeal for preaching increased, and the story as it is recorded in his own journal, is an enduring record of what he did for religion in England.

The work of Wesley was bound to spread further than the work of Whitefield, on account of its larger horizon. The Arian Movement had tried to liberate theology from the subjects of Predestination and Election, in a way that was dangerous to Christian theology. Methodism liberated the soul, by lifting it into a realm of Free Grace, which once assured to the individual, and consciously felt by him, made nothing else of any consequence.

Methodism was a counter-movement to Arianism, in another way. In the summer of 1759, Wesley wrote a letter from Hartlepool, to Dr. John Taylor, which is as candid a piece of writing as any man could desire to receive from his opponent. Professing an esteem for Taylor, he assured him that he could not esteem his doctrine.¹

Among the meeting-houses, the counter-movement was felt here and there through the introduction of ministers from Scotland. The greater number of these belonged to the Moderate party, but the Church of Scotland had no jurisdiction over them, or their congregations.

1. *Vide* John Wesley's *Journal*, vol. iv, of the recent edition. Another instance of Wesley's antagonistic attitude to the Arian party, was the correspondence which he had with Mr. Samuel Sparrow.—*Essays and Dialogues, Moral and Religious*. Chesterfield, 1782 (Dr. Williams' Library).

They occur chiefly in the counties of Northumberland, Durham, York, and Cumberland.¹ At the close of the eighteenth century, these northern congregations preferred pulpit supply from one of the Secession Churches of Scotland, which body was orthodox, and took a real Prebyterian oversight of both ministers and congregations. In the instances where ministers of the Moderate party from the Church of Scotland were invited it was in preference to the men who belonged to the English, and more advanced party.

In London, the policy of the Scots Churches was to attach themselves, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, to the ideals and interests of the Protestant Dissenters.² The minister of Crown Court Church was Patrick Russel, who was a Subscriber at the Salters' Hall Synod. His successor, John Freeland, a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, had previously been minister of the Presbyterian meeting-house at Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. From the year 1752, when a Scots Presbytery was formed in London, the English Presbyterians and the Scotch Presbyterians were distinct in their history.

Among the Independents, the tendency was towards orthodoxy from the time of the Salters' Hall Synod, and this was strengthened by the formation of the London Congregational Board, in 1728. Notwithstanding this, they felt the effect of the various changes that were taking place, including Arianism, Methodism and Sandemanian-

1. One of Simson's students was James Ritchie, M.D., a Scottish "Moderate," who afterwards came into England, and joined the Protestant Dissenters. He was Presbyterian minister of Great Salkeld Cumberland, Ravenstonedale Westmorland, and Mixenden Yorkshire. He criticised the view of John Taylor on "Atonement," and two volumes of his works were published posthumously. Copies of them are in the Warrington Museum.

2. *The Scots Churches in England*, by Kenneth Black, 1906.

ism. Although the counter-movement was for a long time feeble, yet when it did arise among the Independents, it took the form of a renewal of the Church "covenant" by members, and a return to a somewhat crude orthodoxy.¹ A good instance of the work accomplished by such means is seen in the ministry of James Scott, who established a small academy at Heckmondwike, Yorkshire, that supplied a fair number of orthodox students to Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Several subsidiary events took place after the second half of the eighteenth century, such as the formation of the Religious Tract Society. A more direct counter-movement was felt in the work of the preachers of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.² The congregations that were definitely Arian were not affected, but in some cases these preachers were able to recover those congregations which were inclined to heterodoxy, and in other cases they took the meeting-houses that had fallen into disuse, and taught orthodox doctrines.

One of the most eminent men among those who appeared in the counter-movements, was Andrew Fuller (1754—1815). He was a clear and effective controversialist, appealing strongly to the plain man. His lucid reasoning, nimble mind, and graphic manner in conducting an argument were of great advantage to the orthodox side. His theology was that of moderate Calvinism, and no man of his party possessed the practical and speculative temperament as he did. He was one of the founders of

1. An example of a Puritan covenant in England may be seen in, *The Christian's Solemn Vow in Baptism, Explicated and Renewed*, 1704. (A copy in the Dr. Williams' Library.)

2. *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, by a member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings, 1840.

the Baptist Missionary Society, at the time that he was conducting the Socinian controversy with Priestley, Toulmin, and Kentish. In his numerous writings his views are interestingly stated, and they are a striking illustration of Calvinism attempting to justify itself, at the close of the eighteenth century.¹

1. *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, by Andrew Gunton Fuller, 1846.

CHAPTER XVI.

RESULTS OF THE MOVEMENT.

THE Arian Movement has been pitifully neglected, inasmuch as theologians think that it is a controversy which has been disposed of absolutely. The orthodox party have generally looked upon the Arian as enemies of the Cross, and a sad effect is created by the tragic tone of the orthodox historian, when he attempts to describe this period of English Christianity. The dislike of the Movement by the orthodox party is unconcealed, and metaphorically they represent it as a blight, a blast, a fungus, a poison, a canker or a taint. On the other hand, many writers of the Unitarian school unnecessarily labour to prove that the Movement was inevitable from the inherent principle of Protestant Dissenters, being a noble revulsion from an outworn creed.

Unlike the Arianism of the fourth century, English Arianism was not, (to use Gibbon's sneer about the original controversy) "a quarrel over a diphthong." It never became a grand debate upon the exact sense of certain words, and was rather an endeavour to find out how far a rational interpretation of the Scripture could be allowed; and to what degree the Protestant principle of private judgment could be safely developed.

The main results of the Arian Movement in England may be grouped under four heads:—

1. Its work with regard to the subject of Toleration.
2. Its examination of the question of Subscription.
3. Its contribution to Biblical criticism.

4. Its initiation of the period of re-construction in English theology; and allied ecclesiastical questions.

The object of the present writer is not to go into the question of Calvinistic theology, either to praise or blame it. The way in which it arose in England is easily traceable, and the sole object of the present enquiry is to find out how, when, and where it disappeared. There is abundant evidence that it existed. Sometimes, it appeared at its noblest, and at other times, at its narrowest. Sometimes, it is exhibited in the majesty of an individual communion with God through the Mediator of a New Covenant; but at other times, it was the weapon of a party, which however scarcely deserved Milton's jibe of "priest writ large." This type of Augustinianism (for so it was) was created by the Reformers of Europe, as the working basis of Protestantism, and with all its scholastic accretions passed into England, where it became the dominant theology for more than a century.¹ With the depreciation of that philosophy upon which the system was built, through the introduction of the philosophy of Hobbes and Spinoza, a reaction against Calvinism arose, and at the close of the seventeenth century Hobbism had spread from the Universities, until discussions upon it were heard among people at the London coffee-stalls, and a fear arose lest the foundations of morality should be sapped.

1. Calvin, in his desire to retain the doctrines of the Western Church modified the severity of Augustinianism, which system had stood without a rival for at least 800 years. Calvinism—as it has come to be called—was not an innovation, but consisted largely of that mass of traditional theology which Calvin tried to save for the Reformed Churches, and which he passed through the crucible of his own intellect. A recent writer considers that Calvinism was "a feeble echo" of the doctrines of St. Augustine. *Vide The Augustinian Revolution*, by Thos. Allin, D.D. (1911).

The emancipation from Catholicism caused an enlargement of the intellectual powers, and the Reformers emphasised preaching, by placing the pulpit where the altar had previously stood. The essence of Protestantism, briefly was in the sole sufficiency of scripture; and the doctrine of Justification by Faith. The enormous consequences of these two tenets may be realised by contrasting them with the constituents of Catholicism, which may be summed up as dogma and tradition. It is not surprising, if Protestantism, turning all its intellectual effort in the direction of a religious struggle, with an increasing sense of the solemnity of life, considered that the only thing of value in the world was religion. This insularity of outlook was a vital defect in the work of the Puritans, which appeared in their theology as well, but which ought to be pardoned, as it would be if it appeared in any other class of thinker.

Calvinistic theology suffered from its treatment of such philosophic questions as Predestination and Election, more than from any other portion of its system. These subjects, as restrictive and incomprehensible as any that ever entered into theological standards, were in the ablest presentation of them, stimulants to the religious life. In the general delineation of them, however, especially in the period of decadent Calvinism, they were noxious drugs, which destroyed all moral value, and the will to act.

(1) *The work of the Arian Movement with regard to the subject of Toleration.*

It is difficult to say when the stage of freedom arrived for the people of England, but it was probably not before 1725, for the ministers, and not before 1740, for the people. It is clear, that from the beginning of the second half of

the eighteenth century, the doctrines of Predestination and Election were inoperative in the whole of English religious teaching, and even the reactionary period failed to restore their ancient vigour.

Alongside this enlarging horizon, was the increasing perception of the principle of true Protestant toleration. The Act of Toleration itself was a qualified measure. It did not give equal and unfettered freedom in matters of religion. Those who denied the Trinity were penalised, and Roman Catholics remained under disabilities. The principle of toleration which was established by the Act, continued to develop throughout the century. We have already seen how Conformists and Nonconformists gradually came to realise the intolerable position in which a traditional theology had placed them, and attempted to obtain a relaxation of their formularies. Notwithstanding the doctrinal fluctuation of a large number of the Protestant Dissenters, they adhered with a magnificent tenacity to the basal truth of their own position, that liberty must be allowed, where freedom of conscience and worship were claimed. The full price of this adherence to a principle was a high one, but the Protestant Dissenters paid it willingly, although it meant in some instances, toleration of that which was to them by its nature intolerable. These were not the days of apathy towards the pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church, nor was it the age when the title of Protestant was considered vulgar and obsolete. It is one of the most satisfactory and permanent results of the Arian Movement, that it at length brought the Christians of England to the philosophic ideal of John Locke, whose

ardent disciple, Blackburne, enunciated the full extent to which Toleration might be permitted.¹

(2) *In the examination of the subject of Subscription.*

Contemporaneous with an attempt to give full expression to the principle of Toleration, was the effort to obtain relief from subscription. Although subscription was legally required in England from 1689, it is uncertain whether this was generally exacted, and it was not until the Emlyn case, in 1705, that the Ulster Synod made subscription binding upon candidates for ordination. Scotland did not introduce a formula for licentiates until 1711, and it arose through the fears which the case of the young student Aikenhead had created.²

The incident that specially drew attention to the subject was the Bangorian controversy, occasioned by Hoadly's sermon on the kingdom of Christ, echoes of which controversy were heard among the Dissenters, in the "Occasional Papers."

The leaders of the Salters' Hall Synod were Nonsubscribers, who, throughout the debate, perceived that it was necessary to keep the religious liberty which their fathers had strenuously won for them. We have already observed how the Arian Movement assisted in the expansion of the principle of individual liberty, and how by means of Blackburne's book, the petition to Parliament arose.

1. The finest contribution from the Protestant Dissenters was the series of Letters by Philip Furneaux, D.D. (London, 1770), in answer to the views expressed by Justice Blackstone, in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. The principles are expressed with such admirable lucidity that the student of the subject is recommended to examine these Letters, and it is not surprising—as is reported—that the Second Letter caused Blackstone to alter the passage referred to, in subsequent editions.

2. *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 1843, p. 453.

(3) *In the contribution to Biblical criticism.*

A characteristic of the theological literature of the eighteenth century, is the large amount of careful and accurate scholarship which it contains. The texts which distract a modern exegete, have been examined with a frankness and a lucidity that are refreshing. The case of the text I John, v, 7, soon came in for criticism, and after the dissertation by Newton upon the subject, Emlyn was advised by Clarke and Whiston to proceed further. The result was a work which influenced Dr. Bentley to such a degréé, that when he was appointed to the Chair of theology at Cambridge, he publicly gave up the text.¹

Grotius as a commentator was much esteemed in England, but in the matter of method, Locke's influence was paramount. He and his followers treated the New Testament in such a way, that the halo of verbal inspiration began to disappear, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, the Socinian method of dealing with the Scriptures was universally adopted.²

(4) *In the reconstruction of English theology.*

The object of the present work is not dogmatic, and it only remains to state the various theological changes that took place on account of the Arian Movement. Although

1. *A Full Enquiry into the Original Authority of the Text I John 5. 7* (1715).

2. Numerous works could be quoted to illustrate the widespread interest in exegetical scholarship. It will be sufficient to mention two that are not generally known, especially as they represent the middle and end of the eighteenth century. The one is *Observations on the Four Gospels*, by the Rev. Dr. Henry Owen, London, 1764 (a copy in Dr. Williams' Library); and the other is *Prospectus of a New Translation of the Holy Bible*, London, 1786 (a copy in the New College Library, Edinburgh). This work was by Alex. Geddes, LL.D., and its ability is very great. Geddes, whose acquaintance with the writings of the English Arians was evident (although he did not belong to the Arian school) offered, upon a guarantee of £5,000, to undertake, in less than three years, to collate every valuable Greek MS. in Europe.

Calvinism in its initiation was a practical system, it was built upon the theology of the Athanasian Creed. It was with the axiom that the three Persons in the Godhead were real, and at the same time were One God, that Calvin began his construction of Protestant theology. The Socinians demurred at this position, and denied the equality of the Persons, asserting in addition, the impersonality of the Holy Spirit. The result was that while Calvin's scheme dealt with the Scripture facts concerning the Atonement of Christ, in a manner that was strictly literal, Socinus was compelled by his scheme to reject this interpretation, and to deprecate the data.

The English Socinians of the seventeenth century were nearer the original position of Socinus, than those of the eighteenth century, especially in their view of the relationship of Christ to the Trinity, and to the world, in His atoning work. The Arians of the first period, Emlyn for example, may be said to have accepted the traditional view of the Atonement, or at least an Arminianised form of the doctrines of Calvin, and to have dealt critically only with the problem of the Trinity. The second group as represented by Clarke and Peirce, tried to ascertain the exact place of the Person of Christ in the Trinity. The "Subordination" view, as it came to be applied to the problems of Christology in the works of Benson and Taylor, brought about many changes.

It was the *method* of Socinus, more than his theology that triumphed in England, and his procedure of detaching the Old Testament from the New became general. It was thus impossible to reach a conclusion other than one directly opposite to that of Calvin, and in the last quarter of the century, the word "Socinian" represented a view of the simple humanity of Christ, which, it should be

observed, differed as widely from the view of Socinus, as Clarke's view did from that of Arius.

The theologians who attempted to reconstruct the doctrine of the Trinity, at the close of the seventeenth century, were not very successful. Stephen Nye's Sabellian view, sustained by the material assistance of Thomas Firmin, was acceptable for some years. The pamphlet of Dr. Arthur Bury, while not meeting with much open support, was a thrust at the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity. The attempt of Dr. Wallis to give a new explanation of the Trinity was unsatisfactory, and only drew further attention to the fallibility of the Athanasian Creed; and the same may be said of the theories of Isaac Mauduit, Archbishop Tillotson, and John Howe. The Twenty-eight Propositions of Dr. Fowler, presuming the untenability of the old position, endeavoured to find a middle way, appropriating several ideas of the Cambridge Platonists, and anticipating the theological view of Samuel Clarke.¹ Sherlock's theory in support of a realistic Trinity, came dangerously near Tritheism, and the seventeenth century closed without anything being put forward that safeguarded the cardinal points, and at the same time displaced the orthodox creeds.

In the early eighteenth century, the view of Whiston was the first frank expression of a Christology that differed from the Athanasian Creed; and the view of Clarke was a variant of Whiston's. It is incorrect to designate these men Arians, as they professed to be exponents of views prevalent before the time of Arius, but if the dignity of ancient names be necessary, Clarke

1. Hearne, the antiquary, thought that the difference between these two schemes lay in the fact that Fowler made the Son to be a Being necessarily emanating from the Father, and Clarke maintained Him to be derived from the Father, by His Power and Will.

approximately may be styled a follower of Novatian, and Whiston a Eusebian.

While the prominent men of the Arian period disregarded the whole subject, there were some among the liberal theologians who took up the problem, and tried to leave it nearer a solution than where they found it. The seventeenth century view which appealed to them was that of Dr. Fowler, who had posited the theory of the pre-existence of the soul of Christ. It was elaborated by Watts and Doddridge, the former of whom introduced several striking and suggestive additions. This view, to some extent displaced the Athanasian, during the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and may be regarded as the limit of orthodox speculation on the whole subject. The theory of William Hopkins was an adaptation of Fowler's, yet although winning the support of John Jones of Alconbury, it never was influential, partly because the Movement had gone too far.

The eighteenth century Socinians began a new period, which quickly reached the inevitable stage. Lowman "Schekinized" the Logos. Lardner's letter gave the Socinians the authority of his great name, for their view. Priestley, whose progression has been narrated, is a perfect example of the intellectual development of speculation on the subject of Christology.

At the close of the eighteenth century in England, there appeared three main lines of thought on the Trinity, and on the Person of Christ. The Athanasian view, although discredited by many, had received an impulse from a revival of orthodox Dissent, from Methodism, and from the Evangelical party in the Church of England. The liberal theologians among the Dissenters represented

by Watts, Doddridge and Orton believed in the doctrine which the Athanasian Creed contained, but recognised the difficulty of the metaphysical expressions in the symbol, and perceived the dilemma of Protestantism, regarding the words in it that were not found in Scripture. The second party was about to rest in an unqualified Unitarianism, where the problems of Christology ceased from troubling. The third party, the Clarkean, were found in units throughout the Church of England, and in a diminishing quantity among the Protestant Dissenters, who had advanced to the extreme stage. It was evident, that neither the orthodox nor the heterodox had been victorious; each side had gained adherents from the other. At the close of the eighteenth century, the orthodox of every degree united to save the traditional Faith, and English Christendom contained two distinct and irreconcilable elements, the orthodox and the Unitarian.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

In bringing this examination of the Arian Movement to a close, it is permissible to locate its place in the history of English Christianity, and to relate it to the present theological problems. Concerning the first, it has been made evident that the task of liberalising the orthodox theology in England was begun by the men directly and indirectly associated with the Arian Movement. The value of their work has not been appreciated as it deserves, and many have never perceived any value in it. The explanation of this is that the Arian Movement attacked the authority of the Athanasian Creed, and disparaged the doctrine of the Trinity. Indeed, the Movement proved that the surmise of the Nicene Fathers in anticipating a recurrence of the Arian hypothesis was not unjustified; and it vindicated the action of those, who at a later date embodied a dogmatic statement of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Athanasian Creed. The eighteenth century controversies in England prove that any modification of Athanasianism will inevitably lead to Arianism, or to a form of it scarcely distinguishable from the view of that immortal heretic.

The Arian Movement is a subject that has been more than half-forgotten, by English historians. It lies like a rock which a new tide has covered; but it may appear at any ebb. One thing is certain, and it is that for several generations the people of England have combined a

liberal interpretation of their theological formularies, with a devotion to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, which expresses itself most completely in the traditional creeds of the Church.

Several other matters may be referred to in conclusion. One is the vital subject of the Protestant principle. The Salters' Hall Synod settled the question regarding the attitude of English Protestant Dissenters to Tradition : " We think that the Protestant principle, that the Bible is the only and perfect Rule of Faith, obliges those judging not to condemn any man upon the authority of human decisions." The intention of a majority of those who supported this resolution, was to free themselves and others from " human forms and phrases." It must be persistently remembered that they believed in the Bible to such a degree of literality, that everything in it which could be construed as a moral obligation had their adherence.

It cannot be ignored that their declaration compelled them to take the next logical step, and to give the utmost freedom to ministers, and members of meeting-houses. The congregation was often described as " a congregation of Protestant Dissenters whereof — is the pastor"; hence the modern term, "Open Trust-deed." The freedom which such a deed allows to-day might not prevent a congregation of Atheists assembling as Protestant Dissenters, but the conditions of the successive Acts of Toleration have prevented this interpretation of the deed.

In the event of a reconstruction of English Christianity, which however much delayed, is inevitable, the nature of the theological standard would be an essential question. According to the strict Protestant principle, it must be the

Bible. Even with this clear assertion, there is the difficulty of reconciling the change in the Protestant attitude towards creeds. In the seventeenth century, and later, the Calvinistic party looked upon their theological standards as *identical* with the Word of God.¹ The modern method of designating the Word of God as the supreme standard, and the creeds as subordinate, has only created confusion. It has arisen from the endeavour to depart from an untenable position, but it complicates the Protestant principle of "the Bible only," wherever adherence (however slight) to a credal standard is demanded. In the solution of this difficulty the utmost skill and care will be required, and the story of the Arian Movement in England will provide much assistance in this direction.

Finally, the absorbing question that would arise in the event of a reconstruction of English Christianity would be the basis of Union. There is no doubt whatever that a satisfactory union could only take place upon the Protestant principle, "the Bible, the Bible only." Nonconformity is not irreconcilable, but the Established Church must recognise that all questions—polity, liturgy and others—lose their significance compared with the vital issues of a scriptural Gospel, and a scriptural Church. If these could be settled, the next decade might enjoy the fulfilment of the glorious ideal of a National Church.

The points of contact between Conformity and Nonconformity have not been discerned for nearly a century,

1. We are not likely to have a repetition of that marvellous year in Scotland—1843—when the Free Church originated, from a similar conviction that the doctrines of the Westminster Confession were synonymous with Scripture. An early factor in the formation of that Church will be discovered by referring to *The Life, Labours and Writings of Caesar Malan* (1869). Malan primarily received inspiration from Robert Haldane, the great opponent of Moderatism.

although they still exist. Sooner or later, the Established Church will have to consider her sincere and genuine attitude to the Thirty-nine Articles, as the Churches with Calvinistic traditions are already considering their attitude to the Confession and Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly. Necessity, in the first instance, will draw English Conformity and Nonconformity together, as the modern theological methods and results become so well-defined, that they cannot any longer be surmounted, or ignored.

Meanwhile, the figure of Christ hovers round the world, as that of the divinest personality which has ever appeared. The problems of his Person are not yet solved, and the nature of his Being remains unrevealed. The question which Jesus asked his disciples, a few months before His death, is being repeated to-day: "Who do men say that I am?" The same guesses that were made then, are made to-day, and many perceive in Jesus of Nazareth barely more than a Prophet, a Teacher, a Man sent from God. If His own claim as the Son of God is to be accepted everywhere, by all, and for all time, it will have to be confirmed, not by a mere intellectual apprehension of the facts relating to His life, but by an inward consciousness that He is our Lord and our God,—a vision which flesh and blood cannot reveal unto us.

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